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Triveni

INDIA'S LITERARY AND CULTURAL QUARTERLY

FOUNDER

K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU



130481

EDITORS

Dr. BHAVARAJU NARASIMHA RAO

Prof. I. V. CHALAPATI RAO

Vol. 62 JAN. – MARCH 1993 No. 1

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AN APPEAL

K. Ramakotiswara Rau, of hallowed memory, a great patriot and litterateur, founded "**Triveni**", the cultural and literary quarterly in English, on Dec. 25, 1927, at Madras. "Triveni" has been the organ of cultural renaissance in India for over sixty years. Devoted to Literature, History and Art, and dedicated to the propagation of idealism in every sphere of public life, the Journal has fairly realised its aspirations of drawing together the varied and dispersed lovers of art and culture in the different parts of Bharat and is interpreting the Indian Renaissance in its manifold aspects to the world outside.

Illustrious contributors to the journal include great personages like Sri Aurobindo, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, C. Rajagopalachari, Rt. Hon. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, Jawaharlal Nehru, J. Krishnamurti, Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, K.M. Munshi, M. Chalapathi Rau, N. Raghunathan, Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya, Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Dr. V.K. Gokak and many other eminent scholars and renowned writers.

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Correction : Page 75, second column 9: Please *read* Venkataramanacharyulu *for* Venkata Ramachandra. And lines 10 and 11 : *read* Ch. Seshagiri Rao *for* Dr. Ch. Rama Rao.

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Sri N.S. Krishna Murthy, an advocate, scholar, writer and critic, has — as a labour of love — prepared an INDEX for the articles published in TRIVENI from 1928 to 1970 — both author-wise and subject-wise. It is not printed and is not for sale. Our readers and research students may avail themselves of this opportunity and indent for Xerox Copies of articles published in the back numbers at a nominal cost. Further details can be had from the "Triveni" office.

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THE PURSUIT OF HUMAN EXCELLENCE

SRI SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

Introduction

WE INDULGE in so many kinds of pursuits in India today, of which the most important, and, to many people, the only one, is *the pursuit of money-making*. The pursuit of money, the pursuit of pleasure, and the pursuit of power—these three pursuits have frozen our hearts all these forty-five years of our post-independence existence, and have almost destroyed the creative spirit of our people and taken the nation to the brink of despair. This evil tendency can be reversed only by a new pursuit, which will help to purify all other pursuits and destroy whatever is evil in them; *and that new pursuit is the pursuit of human excellence.*

The Ethical Education of our Children

A new India is coming up in our children of the present generation. They are unlike the children of the earlier generations; they have more of what our Vedanta calls the energy of *rajoguna* in place of the inertia of *tamoguna*. They are more intelligent, more vivacious, more alert, more fearless, and more straightforward; these are sterling character assets, and represent the early stages of man's spiritual growth, according to Swami Vivekananda. But they are deficient in social sense, in social responsibility, and in the concern for other individuals and groups; they also exhibit more than the healthy level of crudeness, intolerance, and aggressiveness, revealing the divorce of the energy of culture from the energy of education. The result is that they have become a problem to themselves and a problem to the nation. These traits reveal a character in *which, as our Vedanata* puts it, *rajas* is till under the control of *tamas;* they need to go one step further in their spiritual growth by which their *rajas* will be brought under the control of *sattva* and their *tamas* under the control of *rajas*. Our older generation, with their largely feudal mental make-up, can hardly become fit exemplars for our younger generation. From the lure of a dead past, therefore, our youths have to be summoned to face the hardships and challenges of the living present and shoulder the responsible and creative roles of ushering in the delights of a glorious future. Their energies, now functioning destructively like indisciplined elemental forces such as we experience in floods and earthquakes, need to be made creative and responsible, by self-discipline through a socially-oriented will.

Our scientific technology is engaged in disciplining these elemental forces of nature to enhance human happiness and welfare. We need a similar spiritual technology to discipline the energies of our youths to enhance their own and the nation's welfare. *This is the ethical education of our children, by which they are made to feel the weight of social responsibility for the rebuilding of their national body-politic, by which they learn to give a creative and constructive direction to their*

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enormous energies now expressing largely in destructive and self-cancelling ways, and by which they not only cease to be the despair, but become the shining hope, of the nation.

Tyaga and Seva

Human excellence was the constant theme of Swami Vivekananda. He will welcome this spirit of *rajas* in our younger generation today, but will also whisper the energy of his Vedantic message into every one of them to raise his or her energies to the higher level of *sattva* through self-discipline and cultivation of ethical and social awareness. That energy then will find expression in a socially oriented will and purpose and dedication, with its constant and spontaneous mood and temper of *tyaga* and *seva*—renunciation and service.

This *tyaga* and *seva* is the first fruit of all true education and all true religion from which it issues spontaneously and naturally without the feeling of being forced to sacrifice and without expecting special external inducements to prop it up. Herein we see palpably the spiritual growth of man and the dynamic march of human evolution, beyond the organic level to the psycho-social level, as envisaged in twentieth-century biology. Where this dynamic evolutionary movement is absent, human life gets stuck up in worldliness and becomes stagnant. Such stagnation is spiritual death, says Vedanta; and it is more to be feared than physical death, by a species so high in the scale of evolution as man. Sri Ramakrishna exhorts man to avoid this pitfall of spiritual death; says he:

"Live in *samsara*, or the world; but allow not *samsara*, or worldliness, to get into you; that will make you stagnant. A boat will be on the water; that is its natural place; but water should not be allowed to get into the boat; that will render it stagnant and unfit for the purpose for which it is meant".

The Grihastha Spiritually Growing into the Citizen

In this illustrative teaching, Sri Ramakrishna has compressed the entire message of social ethics and practical religion. It envisages the *grihastha*, or the householder, *evolving into the citizen;* it exhorts the biologically and physically conditioned man or woman to grow into the freedom and expansiveness of the spirituality of citizenship, which manifests itself as renunciation and service, *tyaga* and *seva*. This is the type of men and women that we have to turn out in increasing numbers in our society today. When we do so, we lay the foundations of the new democratic edifice of our nation on rock. But, today, it has only sand for its base; and it is certain that as remarked by Jesus in his parable (Matthew. 7, 24-27) a building built on sand cannot stand.

National Development : Economic *versus* Human

Today we have to ask this very question: On what base are we to build up the structure of our Indian national life? That structure is already rising here, there, everywhere, through our mighty developmental programmes in the fields of educational expansion, scientific research, industrial and agricultural development, defence, and social welfare. By the end of this century, we shall have solved many of our economic and social problems, the problems relating to the external environment in which human life is set. But one problem will remain, and will become more intractable as we advance in the solution of our environmental problems. It relates to the great question as to what is the type of man that will come out of all this development? Is he or she going to be a clever crooky person, whose increased knowledge tends to the exploitation of other people? A worldly individual, whose centre of

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interest is always in his or her little self inside, whose centre of gravity is always in the profits and pleasures outside of himself or herself, and who has become stagnant in the world of sensate satisfactions? Or is he or she to be a dynamic person continuing his or her evolution in the psycho-social levels, who is, accordingly, sensitive to higher values and strives to realize them, and who has achieved, or its striving to achieve, the three-fold integrations referred to by the late Bertrand Russell, namely, integration between the self and society, between the self and nature outside, and between the diverse forces within the self itself?

This central problem of society, namely, *the problem of human excellence,* must be tackled from now onwards—the type of men and women that we want to see in the India that is emerging. If that India is to continue her glorious past into a still more glorious future, she will have to achieve a synthesis of the tested and enduring elements of her own tradition with the finest elements of the modern Western tradition. *This meeting of East and West was achieved in a big way in Swami Vivekananda.* Referring to Vivekananda in his *Life of Vivekananda* as the embodied unity of a nation containing a hundred different nations (p.314), Romain Rolland says (ibid. p. 310) :

" In the two words equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four Yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action from the most spiritual to the most practical.... He was the personification of the harmony of all human Energy. "

The Meeting of East and West in Every Citizen

Every Indian citizen today must achieve this synthesis in a measure in himself or herself. Vivekananda exhorts every Indian to strive in this direction (*The Complete Works,* Vol. V. Eighth Edition. P. 29-30) :

"Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and we will do it. *You are all born to do it. Have faith in yourselves; great convictions are the mothers of great deeds.* Onwards for ever—sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death ; this is our motto."

This is the type of glory and greatness that should descend upon men and women in India, in general, and upon politicians and the members of the administrative services of the Centre and the States, in particular. It will make for the liberation of the spirit of service as a pervasive principle, lighting up the prevailing dark and dismal horizon of our nation and raising the spiritual quality of the life of its citizens. To go here and there to be spiritual is like going here and there to breathe. It is all *here and now.* We have to realize that spirituality is not miracle-mongering, or magic, or cheap mysticism; it is not to be sought merely in caves and forests, but that it is the birth-right of one and all, and is to be cultivated in the fields of one's life and work, in the midst of its ups and downs.

"Better to flame forth for an instant
than to smoke away for ages !"

Our people need to be inspired by this practical, ennobling, and realizable ideal which Vivekananda has put before us in the modern age. He exhorts us that it is far better to live for an ideal for an instant than to lead the life of jelly-fish existence. In the following passage from the *Mahabharata,* uttered by queen Vidula for the benefit of her son, King Sanjaya, we find this heroic message for all our youths today (*Udyogaparva,* 131, 13) :

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Muhurtam jvalitam sreyo
natu dhumayitam ciram—

" It is better flame forth for an instant
than to smoke away for ages ! "

Some of the great men of India, like Sankara and Vivekananada, lived *short but intense lives*. Theirs was an intense dedication to God and man, to God in man; and it changed the course of human history. It is better to live intensely for an ideal and vision than to vegetate for long years in a humdrum existence. This is a powerful sentiment that can drive away the clouds of cynicism and frustration from the sky of India. Every educated citizen has to teach himself or herself that he or she not only is *in* India but is also *of* India and *for* India, and is responsible for the nation's well-being. We have to inspire ourselves with the conviction that we have been called upon to be an instrument of our nation's purposes. What can be a greater glory for man in India today than this, that he or she is living in the most creative period of his or her nation's long history, and that he or she is privileged to contribute to it, big or small. When cynicism and frustration lay their cold hand of death on a person, he or she is unable to respond to any higher value, and becomes suspicious of all values, except one's own self-interest.

Conclusion

We have a long and impressive history and a very rich cultural tradition; and our great thinkers have plunged into life, and into the heart of experience, and given us visions of human excellence which can inspire any culture or civilization. But, for centuries together, we failed to live up to these visions and became stagnant; and from that stagnation, we were rescued by our contact with the modern Western culture. As a result, for over a hundred years now, our society has been passing through the tremendous experience of an awakening, a pervasive renaissance, in the course of which we have been reassessing our own inherited values and comparing them with the values which we have received from the West. A small minority of great minds in India such as Mahatma Gandhi have been able to get a grip on our great national tradition and assimilate into it the tested elements of the Western tradition; and they stand as the great pathfinders for the rest of the Indian society, including the large number of those who have got stuck up in the weak and harmful and stagnant elements of their own national tradition, and of those others who have become blinded by the cheap and equally harmful and stagnant elements of the modern Western tradition; for this minority has synthesized, in themselves, the finest excellences of character of both the East and the West, and demonstrated to our nation that this modern transition in India can be made purposive and fruitful, if the Indian child is given the guidance to understand the dynamic nature of the modern transition in India and to assimilate these two elements in his or her character.



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"TRIVENI":
WELCOME TO HYDERABAD

Mr. Justice AVULA SAMBASIVA RAO

THE RENOWNED JOURNAL of culture, *Triveni,* is coming to Hyderabad from Machilipatnam. It has a long history and also many vicissitudes, ups and downs and disappointments and triumphs. No periodical, committed to culture, could escape them, at any rate in India. No poor and backward country could sustain, for long, any journal of culture, unless it is a limb of a prosperous publishing establishment. But *Triveni* followed a lonely path and consequently suffered from many troubles and handicaps. Still it survived all these decades and the elite of the intelligentia always look forward to read it.

This has been entirely due to the high idealism and great sacrifice of its Founder, late Sri Kolavennu Ramakotiswara Rau. He was a freedom fighter of a rare order. He ardently strove for politicl independence of India by participating in the freedom struggle and going to jail. His concept of freedom did not stop with mere political independence. In its connotation and wide sweep, it took in cultural freedom as well. He felt that without a good level of culture and cultural freedom, political independence alone will not improve the conditions of the Indian people. Therefore, he strove, with equal ardour and emphasis, for cultural advancement of the Indian people. So he started the journal *Triveni* for spreading the message of culture. In the process of sustaining it, the Founder-Editor Ramakotiswara Rau never hesitated to make any sacrifice, his health as well as his wealth inclusive.

Still, by the end of his great life, he found the continuing of *Triveni* an unbearable task. When he was in desperation Sri Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao rushed to the rescue about four decades ago. Sri Bhavaraju took it to Machilipatnam where he lived. Through thick and thin he kept up the journal and also its high standard.

Triveni is a cultural magazine. It depicts world culture as a whole and Indian culture with greater emphasis. It is a repository of ideas and developing human thought. Ideas are the fountain source of all human action and endeavour. Literature and arts are only expressions of such ideas and thoughts. So much so, *Triveni* is a confluence of cultures of all areas and societies, justifying its name fully.

The continuance of such a journal is essential. It is particularly needed in the present context of steep fall of moral, ethical and cultural values in India. In the atmosphere of callousness towards civilized behaviour that is rampant in the higher echelons of Indian society, *Triveni* can play the role of a torch-bearer of decency and higher values in life. Such a journal, therefore, would be very welcome anywhere.

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Machilipatnam has been and continues to be an enlightened centre of Andhra culture. *Triveni* during its long sojourn in that town has interacted with that atmosphere in a significant manner.

To place *Triveni* on a firmer and sounder footing, a charitable trust—Triveni Foundation has been created in its name in Hyderabad. It is therefore expected that— "*T r i v e n i* "*s* future would be assured in Hyderabad.

Now it has come to Hyderabad, a city of composite culture, composite of all elements of Indian life. It is a miniature India. There is brisk cultural life in the city which is ever widening. Added to this, Hyderabad, with its many universities and research institutes, has a high level of intellectual life. Such an atmosphere wo uld be highly conducive to the functioning of *Triveni.*

So every lover of culture in the city heartily welcomes *T r i v e n i* to Hyderabad.

May *Triveni* blaze a wider and brighter trail of culture and civilization.

THE GENESIS OF A POET

DR. NARENDAR SINGH

He is born between
the smudge of a type-writer
and sneer of rejection slips

from the dust-bin
of ignominy
he shoots like a meteor
to limelight.
from the garbage of rubbish
and rotten scribbling
to superb execution
of immortal poetry

from lonely
wretched living
to clangorous publicity
and thunderous ovation

from the morass of
pity and humiliation
to the high pedestal
of glory and renown

What a splendid recovery indeed
from the limbo of
cipher and oblivion
to the dizzy heights
of a poet !

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"TRIVENI": RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Dr. D. ANJANEYULU

Introduction

IT IS HEARTENING to learn that a public charitable trust — by name Triveni Foundation —is formed at Hyderabad to have a permanent basis for publishing *Triveni* uninterruptedly. To all of us connected with it in one way or another — as readers, contributors or publishers — this is sure to be a matter for supreme gratification. Especially in view of the increasing mortality of similar publications of a serious character the world over.

Obviously, this is not a time conducive for little reviews and literary periodicals. Maybe, it never has been, for a long time. The *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Review of Reviews, Nation, Horizon, Adelphi* and *Atheneum, Scrutiny* and *The Criterion,* which were once the pride of the English intelligentsia, had long ago fallen by the wayside. *Encounter,* the international monthly, which stood for cultural freedom and intellectual dissent, and *Punch,* the familiar symbol of British humour, have recently joined the ranks of the great departed.

In America the *Saturday Review* (once called *The Saturday Review of Literature*) is probably defunct. One only hopes that the *Partisan Review* and the *Ever-Green Review* are alive and kicking, though not shining as before. We have, of course, the *New Yorker* going strong.

Numerous are the English periodicals in India, which were a byword for cerebral quality and social prestige. Some of the names that come readily to one's mind are : *Modern Review* (Ramananda Chatterji); *Hindustan Review* (Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha) ; *Indian Review* (G.A. Natesan) and *India* monthly (Humayun Kabir).

Against this disturbing and depressing background, it is quite a pleasant surprise that *Triveni* quarterly has completed 65 years of its purposeful existence. Even those unsure about the continuity of its publication look back nostalgically to its halcyon days. They are happy to hear of its latest issue.

To ensure its safety, the Editor-Publisher of *Triveni* has been changing its place of printing and publication, mostly for reasons beyond his control. This has happened a number of times, without any glaring change in its quality of content or format and production.

I remember that the inaugural issue of *Triveni* came out from "Malabari House", in Vepery, Madras, in January 1928 while its office was formally opened on December 25, 1927. It was a sumptuous, well-got-up volume of 144 pages, printed on fine featherweight paper, with a number of art plates for reproduction of sculptures and paintings.

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Worth recalling are the words of its Founder-Editor, K. Ramakotiswara Rau, (a young lawyer of Narasaraopet, in Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, who had given up his profession, in response to Gandhi's call during the struggle for freedom), setting out his aims and ideals in launching the new periodical. He wrote in September 1928 :

"*Triveni* seeks to interpret the Renaissance movement as reflected in the various linguistic units of India. The Editor is an Andhra, and in close touch with the literary and art movements in Andhra Desa. But he is anxious to publish detailed accounts of similar movements in other parts of India. He makes an earnest appeal to scholars in other linguistic areas to write about the literary and art movements with which they are familiar. *Triveni* will thus lay the foundations for that inter-provincial harmony and goodwill which is the prelude, to a federation of Indian cultures".

From this, one could imagine that this pioneer editor cast himself in the ambitious and idealistic role of a one-man academy of art and letters. In the event, he anticipated the work of the national akademis of free India by a full quarter-century and more. He sought to do single-handed, and actually did in the beginning, what the Sahitya Akademi had set out to do with infinitely larger resources, with official patronage.

But the fact that this Editor was in the thick of the Freedom Struggle did not make matters easy for the journal. From 1937 to 1939, he was a member of the Madras Legislative Assembly. But what is more to the point is that he was arrested in the August movement of 1942. But he took care to leave the publication in the hands of like-minded friends and well-wishers, including K. Sampatgiri Rao, Nittoor Srinivasa Rao (later Mr. Justice), A.N. Murti Rao and others in Bangalore, where it stayed on for some years.

It was in 1949 that *Triveni* obtained what looked like a permanent home, at Machilipatnam, when Mr. (now Dr.) Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao of Triveni Publishers, an ardent admirer of Ramakotiswara Rau, undertook the onerous responsibility of printing and publishing it. Through thick and thin, through fair weather and foul, he has been in charge of the frail bark, ever since.

It was in the spirit of sacrament, of Bharata treating the Padukas of Rama. After the demise of Ramakotiswara Rau in 1970, it was a case of Bharata holding those *Padukas* high, without the expectation of Rama's return.

From Bangalore or from Machilipatnam, a few years earlier, Ramakotiswara Rau was, in all his innocence and credulity, attracted by the offer of a one-time Associate Editor (Mr. Burra V. Subrahmanyam), then a leading lawyer of Hyderabad, to look after the publication of the periodical, as he could well afford to do it. But it proved a wrong step, soon retraced, for return to the safe and secure hands of Narasimha Rao at Machilipatnam.

Sometime in the mid or late 'Sixties, Mr. Bhavaraju toyed with the idea of having a branch office of the Triveni Publishers in Madras and editing the journal from the city, where it was born, while the printing was done at Machilipatnam as before. Though the exercise was not as successful as it was expected to be (thanks largely to the gradual disappearance of the ageing generation of its old friends, patrons and supporters), *it was notable at least for one achievement. The Golden Jubliee Number,* a sumptuous production, with varied fare, was formally released in Madras in March 1978 by Professor K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Srimati Rukmini Devi presiding, at the Sastri Hall. It was released later in May at Machilipatnam by Dr. B. Gopala Reddi, an old student of Ramakotiswara Rau at the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala, a pre-Independence national institution set up by patriots.

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It was always a struggle for *Triveni* with its limited elite readership and uncertain advertisement revenue. It had no good Samaritan like Cecil King (a nephew of Lord Northcliffe), chairman of the Mirror group, who printed *Encounter* free for some years, to come to its aid. For once, it appeared there might be someone to make a like gesture. And that was Prof. C.V.N. Dhan, a successful educational entrepreneur, of Guntur, who published it for a few years. It was from here that the Diamond Jubilee Number was released late in 1988 by Dr. K. Satchidananda Murti.

The general experiment, however, did not last much longer. The journal had, therefore, to go back to Machilipatnam once again, under the familiar, protective wings of Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao. He has been shouldering the burden, with admirable patience and forbearance, all along.

We cannot overlook the relentless fact that he is not growing any younger. He is fast approaching eighty, though keeping reasonably fit for his age. He can't be expected to bear the burden single-handed forever. It is indeed heartening to find that a trust has been formed by his son, B.N. Murty, in Hyderabad to help bring out the periodical from Hyderabad from January 1993. The idea is to ensure the continuance of the institution, not letting it depend entirely on an individual. It started as a votive offering in Madras ; our prayerful hope is that it would be a place of worship on the banks of the Musi, in Hyderabad. ●

MY BIRD FLEW AWAY

R. Y. DESHPANDE

My bird flew away
Like a song leaping from dream;
I could have learnt
From the dazzle of his wings
Of the mystery of the flight,
Of the joy of the upsoaring art;
I could have seen
With his two little eyes
The colours that lie behind sight.
Like a rainbow that needs no cloud,
Like a harp that needs no strings,
I could have dreamt
Of stars that need no night;
I could have been,
O thou love so proud,
The lover that needs no heart.
Like a song leaping from dream
My bird flew away
To a land of sunrise
Glimpsed at times across the day.

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THE MESSAGE OF "RAMAYANA" TO THE MODERN WORLD

Dr. I. PANDURANGA RAO

RAMAYANA, THE WORD and Ramayana, the work are both marvellous, immortal and unparalleled creation of a Master Mind, sagacious in vision, soft and sophisticated in speech and silently eloquent in message. Ramayana is neither a story nor an epic, but an everlasting and telecasting lighthouse that has been working ever since the word has acquired vision in the history of Indian literature, culture and philosophy as a transformer converting dazzling darkness into leading light. It bears testimony to the Vedic verdict that a single syllable can serve as a source of stupendous splendour (*aksharad-deeptiruchyate).* This celebrated work has, therefore, been very appropriately described as a poetic version of the Vedic vision (*Vedah prachetasadasit sakshat Ramayanatmana).*

The word Ramayana, like the name Rama, has a world of significance and conveys in a compact and concise form the purport of the work *Ramayana.* It is a compound word formed with the combination of two component words — *Rama* and *Ayana.* Rama is the main character in the composition and 'ayana' (meaning march, movement or abode) is the characteristic feature of this pivotal personality. The central theme of *Ramayana* is the well-designed and purposeful March of Rama in search of Good — good conduct, good heart, good will, good words and a good world worth living in, Rama is, where good exists. That is his abode and that makes him mobile. Ramayana is, therefore, an inspiring and instructive description of the graceful March of Rama.

The word Ramayana also presents a judicious combination of static tranquillity and dynamic adaptability. The word 'Rama' is derived from the root 'Ram' meaning " to get absorbed" and "ayana" from the root 'E' meaning "to move on". In Rama we find both these traits in rational proportion, making him a complete man—the Man of Valmiki.

The word "Ramayana" was so thoughtfully coined by Valmiki that it includes the Woman as well as the Man as conceived by the Master. Raamaa the feminine form of Ram stands for Sita and so the word Ramayana, split up in two ways—Rama+Ayana and also Raamaa + Ayana— denotes the concurrent and coordinated March of both Rama, the son of Dasaratha, and Raamaa, of offspring of Janaka. Valmiki uses the word "Rama" to denote Janaki in a number of places. Thus the concept of equal importance to man and woman is inherent in the very title "Ramayana". In fact Valmiki refers to his work as the great grand story of Sita (*Sitaayaascharitam mahat*). Goswami Tulasi Das used the word "Charitam" very appropriately in naming his celebrated work "Ramacharita Manas". Incidentally, the word "Charit" used by Goswami also has the connotation of "movement" or habitation, and

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the Saint has placed his "Manas" at the disposal of his Lord to inhabit. That is why he seeks the blessings of Sri Ganesh to ensure that his "Manas", the innermost conscience surging with vibrant waves of devotion, becomes the blissful abode or habitat for his Lord (*Basahu Rama Siya Manasa More).* Thus the "Ayanam" of the Adikavi has been wisely appropriated by the medieval saint-poet Tulasi as "manas", the forum for the sportive manifestation and the characteristic deeds (*Charitam)* of his Lord. We are, therefore, fully justified in establishing a link between the two great souls when we say Valmiki is reborn as Tulasi (*Valmiki Tulasi Bhayo).*

If Rama was an embodiment of Dharma (*Ramo Vigrahavaan Dharmah),* Goswami Tulasi Das was Devotion personified. Devotion or Bhakti is the main spirit behind this immortal work which Valmiki chose to name "ayanam" to start with. It was indeed a big "start" which took innumerable forms not only throughout the country of its origin but also beyond its physical boundaries.

It was rightly said about this magnificent work of universal appeal that it would spread far and wide — wherever humanity exists, rivers continue to flow and mountains stand firm. In all the Indian languages, we have a profusion of great epics based on the theme of *Ramayana.* To name a few, *Kamba Ramayanam* in Tamil, *Toravai Ramayanam* in Kannada, *Ranganatha Ramayanam* im Telugu, *Adhyatma Ramayanam* in Malayalam, *Bhavartha Ramayanam* in Marathi, *Giridhar Ramayanam* in Gujarati, *Krittivasa Ramayanam* in Bengali, *Balaram Das Ramayanam* in Oriya, *Madhava Kandali Ramayanam* in Assamese, besides hundreds of works in Sanskrit have given multiple colour and flavour to this fascinating theme which has become an integral part of Indian thought and culture.

Bhakti (devotion), Shakti (spiritual power) and Rakti (popular appeal) are the three main motivating forces which have driven home the message of this time-honoured composition ever since its genesis and hopefully it will continue to provide inspiration, guidance and direction to humanity in the centuries to come. Valmiki being a pioneer in the field maintained a marvellous balance between the three, while the later poets chose one of them as their main stream and incorporated the other two as tributaries. For instance, Bhakti is the main stream of *Ramacharita Manas,* while Rakti is that of works like *Ramachandrika* of Keshav Das. Whatever the main thrust, almost all the exponents of theme deviated from the original course of events depicted by Valmiki. But this deviation has only added dignity and magnanimity to the original theme as the message conveyed and intended to be conveyed is the same throughout.

Valmiki excels more in silence than in speech as far as his message is concerned. He speaks through his characters who also often choose to be less eloquent in order to be more expressive. Sometimes even inanimate objects express themselves better than articulate beings when they feel the solemn touch of the Sage-poet (*Kavyarshi*). For instance, when the sage stands on the bank of the river Tamasa watching the whispering waves, the crystal clear water seems to be suggesting to the seer that the human mind, too, should try to follow the fascinating movement of river-water. The poet gives a secular expression to this incomprehensible voice of the river thus:

अकर्दममिदं तीर्थं भरद्वाज निशामय ।
रमन्नीयं प्रसन्नांबु सन्मनुष्य मनोयथा ॥

(Look, my dear Bharadwaja! Just listen to the pleasant and placid water flowing with graceful gait like the pure conscience of a gentle person.)

While saying this to his intimate disciple, Bharadwaja, the sage must have had, at the back of his mind, the qualities of a perfect

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man narrated by Narada only a few days back when he was approached by the sage to find out whether a man of all the desirable qualities ever existed on this earth. Narada says in clear terms, "Yes, such a man exists—does exist—right now and here, with us, in us and around us," and points out Rama, a man of great potentialities, a rare specimen of righteousness personified, and an admirable admixture of wisdom and strength, courage and compassion, conviction and consideration, dedication and detachment and finally ultimate reality and immediate justice. The sage-poet Valmiki finds all these qualities reflected in the reverberating rivulet Tamasa. Thus the man of vision identifies the man of mission whose thoughts, actions and expressions are themselves lasting messages for the vast mass of humanity.

As the basic concern in all these qualities and attributes is humanity, Valmiki finds that the man of his vision is one whose human virtues make him and his admirers forget even the intrinsic divinity in him. Thus the primary message that *Ramayana* has for the humankind as a work of art is that the basis for all human resource development is man-making. Dignity, decency and decorum are the basic virtues which go to make up a man or a human being. If the human being is human in the desired sense of the term, the world is worth living in. Otherwise all the material prosperity and scientific advancement will work against the interests of humanity and the purpose of life itself gets defeated.

Delighted to find an ideal human mind reflected in the river water, Valmiki takes a walk on the river bank. He looks around. He finds a couple of birds sitting on the branch of a tree engrossed in their sweet and soulful moments of joy. Suddenly a hunter shoots down the male-bird, separating the mates for no fault of theirs. This shakes the tender heart of the sage and his anguish bursts out in the form of a verse. This is the famous verse which is supposed to have converted deep agony (*Shoka)* into a fine poetic expression (*shloka)*; an emotional outburst into an elegant verse. The very starting of the verse *'Ma Nishada'*, (Oh! hunter thou shall not) has a startling and stimulating effect which has had a lasting impact on human heart right from the Vedic or epic age down to the modern age.

The oft-repeated verse firmly seated in the hearts of all lovers of poetry and expressing compassion deserves a reproduction:

मा निषाद प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः शाश्वताः समाः ।
यत्क्रोक्षामिथुनादेकमवधीः काममोहितम् ॥

Ram 1. 2-15

(You cruel hunter, thou shall not live for long with respect and rapport as you have mercilessly massacred one of the two innocent creatures depriving the pair of their legitimate personal pleasure.)

The moments that followed were momentous not only for the poetic community but also for the entire humanity as they have inspired innumerable votaries of poetic expression and conveyed the basic message of non-killing to the human race. This is all the more relevant to the modern world, miserably caught in a mess of mad and misdirected man-killing day-in and day-out . What is more significant to us today is that this message voiced by a magnanimous heart condemns not only man-killing but all killing causing any imbalance in the organisation of the environment in which we are fortunately alive in spite of our meaningless animosity towards our fellow-beings, and the nature that nurtures us. This utterance made by the sage-poet in a moment of grief coupled with compassion for the cosmic community has a world of significance for the citizens of the world who are bound to deprive themselves of the right to live if they do not care for others who also enjoy this right by law of nature and natural justice.

The place of women in modern society is another common topic which finds a realistic

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approach in *Ramayana*. The very title of the story *Ramayana* places man and woman (particularly Rama and Sita) on the same pedestal giving them equal status, dignity and importance. This has been discussed earlier from the semantic point of view.

If we carefully analyse the course of events that brought elevation and elegance to the ideal couple— Rama and Sita — we find that each one of them excels the other in all respects — in physical beauty, mental make-up, metaphysical outlook, spirit of service and sacrifice, concern for others even at the cost of personal comforts, indifference towards earthly pleasures, integrity in thought, word and deed, unshakable faith and trust equally reciprocated by both, and above all a kind heart for the humankind even in the face of unkindness and unreasonableness.

In some respects Sita excels Rama. Rama became great because Sita was greater. Her readiness to leave for forests along with her husband, the forbearance she showed towards all atrocities committed on her, not only by the evil-minded enemies but also by her own kind-hearted husband reflect her guiding principle in life — silent suffering with strong determination to stick to the path of righteousness. This attitude towards life did reward her and her husband too and made their life story immortal and their message universal and eternal. This is what Sumantra says while consoling King Dasaratha and the grief-stricken Queen Kausalya :

न शोच्यस्तवं न शोच्या ते शोच्यो
नापिजनाधिपः ।
इदं हि चरितं लोके प्रतिश्ठस्यति शाश्वतम् ॥

(There is nothing to worry about your dearest son and devoted daughter-in-law. They are quite happy because they have invited this course of suffering on their own. They are treating pleasure and pain alike. Therefore neither you nor the king should be distressed at this turn of events which is bound to make a mark in the history of mankind while endurance takes care of the trivial troubles and turmoils that we are facing now.)

These words of Sumantra have a Mantric (enchanting) effect not only on the aged parents but also on the age-old humanity as they provide strength—mental and spiritual — to the majority of the suffering community in the world. Suffering is not a curse, but a crude form of penance gifted to a selected few who are designed and destined to distinguish themselves as the commissioned counsellors for human dignity — "Pratishtha".

It may be recalled that the word "Pratishtha" occurs for the first time in the very first utterance of the sage Valmiki (*Ma Nishada Pratishtham Twam*). The same word repeated here as spoken by the royal charioteer Sumantra needs to be compared and correlated with its earlier reference. What is "Pratishtha"? May be, that is the essence of life—the net product of all pleasures and pains of life, what remains after everything in life disappears. All that happens fades away but the feeling left by these events does remain ultimately. This "ultimate" serves as an ultimatum to those who try to tread the path of temporary and temporal gratification in preference to the long-standing general good. This is the message which Valmiki is trying to convey here through Sumantra whom he describes as *Mantra Kovida* (an expert in the efficacy of human voice).

The Indian Constitution has added a new dimension to the concept of culture by incorporating a modern phrase 'composite culture' (Article 351) to promote the basic unity and integrity of the sovereign democratic republic of India. In the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, we find a comprehensive coverage to this concept developed on a far higher and almost a global perspective.

Starting with the national and human culture of public administration nurtured by the

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devoted and dedicated ruler Dasaratha, the poet takes us though an infinite variety of cultures including sage-culture, Vedic culture, work-culture, family-culture, royal culture, rural culture, tribal culture, animal culture, bird culture, forest culture, terrorist culture, consumption culture, submissive culture, water culture, wind culture, space culture, thought culture, speech culture, action culture and so on. If we start citing instances of these various cultures, the entire story will be told. What is relevant to note and appreciate at this point is the marvellous way in which all these cultures were woven into a fine fibre of life by the composite personality of Rama.

Starting from Ayodhya, his march upto Lanka covers different areas where these cultures manifested themselves for his fraternal touch. He mingled with the representatives of these cultures and gave them a human touch, making human culture more dignified than even the culture of the gods and the godmen. The most touching example of his accommodative spirit in respect of cultural diversity is his alliance with Vibhishana, his friendship with Sugriva, his sympathy for Ravana coupled with a genuine admiration for his extraordinary valour and invincible courage and conviction. He treats the tribal leader Nishada (Guha) as a personal friend and embraces him. He performs the funeral rites for Jatayu, though unable to do so for his own father. He tolerates Kaikeyi and tells Bharata not to misunderstand her. He cares more for the coronation of Vibhishana than for his own re-union with Janaki, immediately after the battle was over. He makes his wife walk through the lanes of Lanka. He refuses to enter any town like Kishkindha and Lanka till he completes his full period of exile. He accepts the divine aircraft—the Pushpaka — for the sole compelling need to return to Ayodhya before the due date, lest his brother Bharata should end his life by surrendering his physical body to the sacred fire. This is the type of culture that Valmiki breathes into his characters, particularly the two main characters — Rama and Sita. But immediately after reaching Ayodhya, he sends it back to its rightful owner Kubera from whom his brother Ravana had grabbed it without any regard for propriety in matter of property. This surprises even Vibhishana who recollects the characteristic smile of Rama while accepting the offer.

Goswami Tulasi Das too presents the cultural aspect of the story from a purely devotional point of view. In fact devotion or Bhakti is the highest form of culture as it purifies the heart of the devotee and establishes his perfect identity with the deity. As the devotee advances in his capacity to visualise divinity, potentially present in all individuals, the cultural values automatically get absorbed in him. This is what Tulasi calls *nirbhara bhakti* and what Gita depicts as *ananya bhakti*. Valmiki chooses to term this 'Parama Preeti' (the most refined form of love). In fact devotion is a chemical product formed by a spontaneous synthesis of pure love and unquestionable faith. We find this devotional culture predominant in hundreds of works written on the theme of *Ramayana* in Sanskrit and other vernaculars.

Valmiki depicts Hanuman as an ideal devotee balancing his acts of devotion with awareness, obedience and execution. Manas too does not lag behind; rather goes a step forward to place the devotee sometimes at the doorstep and sometimes at the centre of the sanctum sanctorum of the deity Himself. No wonder if the servant excels his master in some respects. Tulasi gives an example of Rama trying to cross the ocean with the help of a bridge while Hanuman just takes-off by his own propulsion. Tulasi also places Hanuman (Kapeeswara) at par with Valmiki (Kaveeswara). The common characteristic in the two seems to be their mastery over communication. Goswami must have meticulously observed how Valmiki, himself, an exemplary exponent of the calculus of speech shaped his favourite character Hanuman as his mouthpiece. Both are splendid specimens of word-culture.

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Of all the types of cultures depicted in *Ramayana,* word-culture is the most subtle and also the most relevant one for the modern world. It is the word that creates the world. So the seers and the saints who handled the theme of *Ramayana* paid special attention to this aspect of word-culture so as to imbue the readers of *Ramayana* with this culture of using the most powerful instrument of speech for their own satisfaction and for others' delight.

When Hanuman meets Rama for the first time on the outskirts of Kishkindha on the banks of Lake Pampa, what impresses Rama most is his art of speaking. It appeared to Rama as if it was not Hanuman that was speaking but his heart. This is the language of the heart which Hanuman cultivated and which pleases Rama most. More than the content conveyed, the manner in which Maruti presents it adds dignity to the diction. Rama exclaims at Hanuman's skill in speaking, and tells his brother Lakshmana, "Look, how marvellously he speaks! He has not spoken a single syllable without significance, he has not wasted a single word, nor has he missed an appropriate word. He has not taken more time than his ideas needed. Every word that he spoke can never be forgotten. Such a voice promotes general good and remains forever in the minds and hearts of generations to come."

In the light of what Rama has said about Hanuman's speech, one can easily see why Goswami equates Hanuman with Valmiki. Again when Hanuman sees Janaki for the first time in the Ashoka garden of Ravana, Hanuman exclaims, "To find Sita here is just like listening to a person devoid of word culture—who tries to say something, but actually says something else."

The emphasis on word-culture can be seen in almost all characters of Valmiki including minor characters like Shabari, Swayamprabha and Trijata and also Kumbhakarna who sounds highly cultured in his presentation of an intricate problem and its practical solution to his adamant elder brother, Ravana. A careful study of Valmiki from this point of view is bound to promote word-culture in the modern world which is facing a communication crisis not only at political levels but also in social and intellectural fields.

Besides Rama, Sita and Hanuman, there are some major characters whose life and attitude towards life have an ocean of message to convey for the betterment of humanity. Most outstanding among them is Bharata whom Valmiki calls Bhratri Vatsala (favourite brother of Rama). Brother Lakshmana is also equally dear and near to Rama, but there is a difference between the two. Valmiki makes out this subtle difference between the two brothers by keeping one very close both physically and temperamentally, while the other enjoys not only affection but also admiration of the eldest brother. That is why Valmiki calls Lakshmana a Lakshmi Vardhana (one who promotes grace and grandeur). Even the youngest one Shatrughna is not ignored. He is Nitya Shatrughna (one who puts an end to the eternal enmity within and without). Rama, the chosen man of Valmiki, is of course, Satya Paraakrama (one whose strength lies in his truth). Thus the four attributes given to the four brothers communicate the composite culture nurtured by their elevated thinking, noble functioning and ennobling words.

In simplicity, humility and magnanimity Bharata ranks highest, partly because of the ordeal to which he was subjected by the unexpected turn of events. The shocking news of Rama's sudden exile immediately following the proposed coronation first upsets the father, then mother Kausalya, thereafter the entire Ayodhya and finally the innocent and devoted brother Bharata. Bharata had to establish his innocence and dedication to his noble brother before everyoen. He had to convince Kausalya first, then Vasishtha, later even a sage like Bharadwaja and ultimately the perplexed and

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perturbed audience at Chitrakoota. The dialogue between Rama and Bharata in Chitrakoota is a monumental discourse on human values in which both the brothers fight for their right not to rule but to reject their legitimate power. Both of them had a claim upon the kingdom in their own way, but neither of them wanted to exercise it; for it went against all canons of human culture. Ultimately they found a solution to the problem in the sandals of the pious feet of Rama.

The scene dominated by the dialogue between the two strong advocates of eternal truth and immediate justice is an excellent illustration of practical philosophy, less preached and more practised in thought, word and action. There are very few instances when Rama of Valmiki preaches. The sermon on the mount Chitrakoota is an exception. On seeing Bharata approaching him, Rama, even from that distance, could discern a prince for whom propriety had a priority over power, and who has come to plead for that traditional propriety which should not be sacrificed even if it leads to momentary injustice. The words used and the thoughts expressed by the two brothers amidst the sages and citizens of Ayodhya and Chitrakoota articulate the lasting message that *Ramayana* has for the human society. Here lies a lesson which the modern world will be wise in taking from this great epic—particularly at a time when consumption, hoarding, exploitation, aggresion etc., have crept into the society eroding our cultural and human values.

If Rama stands for truth, Bharata stands for justice, Lakshmana for duty and Shatrughna for humility. Besides these four brothers, we have other exemplifying figures. There are Vali and Sugriva, dealt with by Rama in his own characteristic way. The three mothers — Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi — stand respectively for modesty, magnanimity and determination. Other women-characters like Ahalya, Anasuya, Shabari, Tara, Mandodari and Swayamprabha also have their own philosophy of life which can educate the modern world if properly understood. Swayamprabha is a character miserably neglected by most authors; but she is the most mystic, magnificent yet modest character who helps Hanuman and his friends searching for Sita in getting through a critical situation. She literally leads them from utter darkness of a closed cave to the broad daylight illuminating the inquisitive waves of the ocean which bridges the gulf between Rama, the mission and Sita, the vision.

Even a very ordinary woman named Trijata visualises the ultimate victory of Sita and cautions her fellow watch-women against thinking ill of her as the future of Lanka depended on her mercy.

Let us consider the metaphysical message that *Ramayana* has to convey to those who have the necessary background. The entire *Ramayana* consisting of 24,000 verses is, in a way, an enlarged expression of Gayatri with its 24 key syllables (Bijaksharas), each syllable permeating through a thousand verses.

The last word that can be said about the message of *Ramayana* to the modern world is its emphasis on 'general good' (Shubham) as distinguished from its counter-concept of victory (Jayam) which forms the main thrust of *Mahabharata*. *Ramayana* provides the body for Indian culture while *Mahabharata* fortifies it with the 'mind' that is basically Indian but effectively human. These two works produced by two master-minds of the world have served as supplementary readers for the students of literture and culture through the ages. The purport of such works refuses to be measured by relative scales of time and space. They are for all time to come and for all people in the world.

The message of *Ramayana* is perhaps more meaningful to the modern world than to the ancient or medieval world as the modernity that we are proud of has been concentrating more on material prosperity, consumption of earthly pleasures even at the cost of the protec-

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tion and preservation of the earth itself (which is gradually turning into an *agnigarbha* from the good old stature of *ratnagarbha)* and projection of self at the expense of fellow-beings. Valmiki uses a very beautiful word "madhavi" to convey the magnanimity and potentiality of the Mother Earth who produced a darling daughter, Janaki, who was dearer to the world than to the earth. She found her compeer in Rama, a jewel among the great rulers of solar race. The union of Rama and Sita is therefore an everlasting one — of heaven and earth, light and soil, truth and beauty, mission and vision, and above all of the Man, the embodiement of Dharma, and the Woman, the Chastity personified. What we need today is not a mansion, but man with infinite virtues to promote happy living in a peaceful world. That is the only answer to all the problems threatening the very existence of the terrestrial stability and celestial serenity in the modern world. Man-making, non-killing, sacrifice, sanctity, simplicity, integrity in thought, word and deed, and a firm faith in human dignity are the assets that *Ramayana* has given us. It is our duty to preserve them so that we are preserved as a race. ●

IN INDIAN STREETS

Dr. P. RAJA

130481

O what is that sound which jars on my ear
down in the streets crying, crying?

It is the naked urchins, dear,
clamouring for *sundal* given at the temple
by sinners seeking redemption.

It is the thirsty women, dear,
quarrelling over their seniority
in the queue at the street tap.

It is the angry old men, dear,
shouting at the ration-shop dealer
for displaying empty palmoil cans.

It is the disappointed young men, dear,
raising slogans against the Government
for not activating the Employment Exchange office.

It is the wee ones with empty stomachs, dear,
crying for a cup of milk, when cauldrons of it
wash the dirt off the sacred stones.

Or it must be the gods themselves, dear,
screaming for their safety
from bullet-battered temples.

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THE INTERLOPERS

(SHORT - STORY)

MANOJ DAS

MARTHA HAD ALREADY been enamoured of India for a couple of months when he chanced on Talkota. That was a decade before the idea of selling India to all sorts of tourists from abroad had struck a few brains in New Delhi personally selected by Devil. Talkota of those days had nothing more to boast of than its palm-studded semi-circular beach cutting into the sea like a giant-sickle and this solitary mansion of the Maharaja of Manaspur just turned into a hotel, "reminisced Khanna, the founder-manager of the hotel. He had retired, but had settled down at Talkota. The hotel he once managed had grown ten times bigger. His sons were doing well in different trades all connected with tourism, but Khanna was never tired of bemoaning the loss of the serenity and tranquillity of the place, perhaps somewhat envious of the elegant Talkota of bygone days.

This was not unusual. Those who initiate a process of destruction are always the most vociferous ones to lament when the process meets its logical culmination. But I had no heart to tell this to Khanna's face. We were out for a leisurely stroll.

"But why should Martha die here?" I asked when he pointed at her insignificant tomb in the cemetery adjacent to the church.

He did not answer straight away. He could not have, I realised, soon. He showed me to a rock and sat down on another facing me. We were at a height from which the beach and the newly-built fashionable cottages, under the smoky twilight, looked like a fading Persian carpet. Once the flock of tourists, the fishermen and the picnickers were blotted out of our vision, we were left with only the old church standing behind us like an unearthly sentinel, the silence of the cemetery — broken only by an occasional gust that sounded like the very voice of silence.

There was an uncanny compatibility between the atmosphere and Khanna's narration — so much so that I took his narration almost as a genuine report.

Pravin, the only 'guide' available at Talkota in those days, honest and charming like a child, shuffled between the city and Talkota and secured customers for the hotel. Khanna liked him very much and let him occupy a small suite in one of the outhouses of the mansion. But Pravin suddenly became a stranger! The unfortunate change occurred after an accident which killed four tourists when their boat sank while returning from an islet some five kilometres off the shore. Pravin alone has survived the catastrophe. Remorseful and depressed, he stopped working and passed his time, sitting, sprawling or sometimes even rolling on the sands where the tidal waves had hauled up the dead bodies of his companions.

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One winter night Khanna was woken up by repeated knocks on his door. He was surprised to see Pravin in a glittering nightgown.

"Do you like it? I bought it at a Paris sale, rather cheap. *Bon*! Now to business. I have a desire to draw your sketch" said Pravin, almost forcing his way into Khanna's room.

Khanna obviously believed in the phenomenon of the dead possessing the living. He concluded that Pravin had been possessed by M. Ramond, a French artist. In fact, Ramond had proposed to draw his sketch only hours before being drowned.

Khanna had to sit down. He watched Pravin as Pravin watched him — and Pravin surely surveyed his contours with Ramond's eyes. The rooms the foreigners occupied had not been disturbed, for if not their relatives, officials from the nearest consulates of their countries were expected to arrive any moment and take charge of their belongings. But Pravin had taken the key of Ramond's room from the dozing receptionist and had opened it and slipped on the dead artist's gown.

And in the morning Khanna learnt that the receptionist was not without his share of the amazing experience. Half-asleep, he was under the impression that the key was taken by Ramond himself and he had gone to sleep with that idea. He had clean forgotten all about the fatal accident.

Pravin drew Khanna's figure several times and then gave up, annoyed that he could not draw as accurately as he ought to. Perhaps the spirit could not tame the untrained hands of Pravin beyond a certain degree. Khanna did not know what to do. But one morning, while on a stroll along the beach, he heard a tune that had been familiar to him, for it used to be often hummed by Mr. Barrett, drowned along with the other three. That day Pravin greeted him exactly in Mr. Barrett's style and spoke very close to the accent of an Englishman. Even his voice seemed to have undergone a change.

The consulate officials arrived and Mr. Khanna kept busy. The third one to die in that accident was a young man from a northern Indian city, son of a wealthy man. Along with his parents came a young lady who wept almost continuously. Perhaps she had been betrothed to the dead man. Khanna observed that Pravin often stalked her silently, shedding tears. Had he by then come to be possessed by the young man's spirit? No doubt it was so, felt Khanna. He grew anxious particularly when the young lady too began casting her glances at Pravin. He did everything possible to check any meeting between them. Luckily, the young man's parents, besides making some casual enquiries about the guide who had survived the tragedy, did not show keenness to talk to him, after being confidentially informed that he had grown crazy.

The visitors left and all was quiet again. Pravin looked sober. He was again becoming himself, thought Khanna and heaved a sigh of relief. He would not like the nice guy to be cast away as a lunatic.

It was at this stage that Martha descended on Talkota. Soon she was seen spending hours in Pravin's company. Khanna was not unhappy. After the trauma Pravin had suffered, he needed a woman's love. Khanna did not care even if she was a Scottish divorcee trekking in India in search of a crash course in Nirvana.

Pravin still avoided Khanna, but Martha took Khanna into confidence rapidly. Love brought visible changes in her demeanour and looks.

"Now I realise why Swmi Turyananda tenderly declined to initiate me,"she told Khanna one evening. "I revolted when he told me that I was not yet ready for an ascetic way of life. Alas, I wasn't. Pravin was yet to come in my life."

She violently blushed after making the confession.

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"Not going to. He already means everything to me."

"You have said what any girl in love would say," Khanna quipped smilingly, without pretending to be excited.

" Probably yes," she nodded, a little disappointed over Khanna's matter-of-fact reaction to her romance. "And I also propose to do what other lovers would do. I am taking him out to a few places.

"Bon voyage!" said Khanna with a patronising nod.

Khanna saw Pravin only the next day when, along with Martha, he was hurrying to board a taxi for the town.

Even though Pravin did not have the courtesy to take leave of him, Khanna almost forcibly took him aside and said, "Pravin, I am happy that our guide is now out on a guided tour! I had no opportunity to talk to you all these days. The fact is, you were hardly in a mood to listen to me. You were — I don't know whether you know it or not — a sort of possessed. I am so happy that you are yourself once again. Perhaps a bit of exorcism has been performed by love...."

Khanna's effort at arousing a little humour in Pravin somehow did not click. Pravin just cast a sad look at him. Martha, unwilling to slacken her total hold on her lover, stopped back to reclaim Pravin.

Khanna swore mildly and waved at them lifelessly.

It was a quiet noon, a month later, when Martha suddenly popped up before Khanna, looking the ghost of herself.

"But won't it be more realistic for me to put that question to you ? " asked Khanna.

Martha did not contradict him. From what she mumbled on without the least zeal to make a coherent statement, Khanna understood that Pravin stealthily deserted her, once they had reached Rishikesh!

Martha lived only for a month more. The doctor attributed her death to a certain virus fever. But Khanna diagnosed it as a sheer lack of the slightest will to live.

A few days later Pravin appeared before him and greeted him with a smile as he used to do in the past after every temporary absence.

"Get out!" shouted Khanna. "I never expected you to be so heartless and treacherous. I have no interest in any explanation, you brute."

Pravin cast a blank look and then walked out without a murmur.

That should have been a comfortable finale to the episode. Khanna's conscience was as clear as the autumn sky after his admonition to Pravin, but for his discovery of a small diary on a tall book-rack. It had been left there by Bob, the fourth member of that fatal voyage. Khanna had almost forgotten him so quiet and unobtrusive the man had been during his stay at the hotel.

The last written page of the diary read : "Talkota is fine, but I must leave for Rishikesh. From there begins the mysterious abode of the gods..."

Poor Pravin : I was unnecessarily rude to him. I wonder if he was at all aware of the fact that his body and other faculties had become Bob's agency and that it was Bob who deserted Martha! I have continued to look for Pravin, but to no avail and for me that is no small cause for regret!" Khanna told me as we began descending towards the hotel, almost groping our way in the dark. ●

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THE WORLD OF VALMIKI : TWO PERSPECTIVES

V. SIVARAMAKRISHNAN

[N. RAGHUNATHAN'S BIRTH CENTENARY YEAR : The 1993 marks the birth centenary of a great scholar-journalist who, despite the anonymity with which he covered himself for the major part of his working life during his association with "The Hindu" (1926-57), has a secure place in the history of Indian journalism. N. Raghunatha Aiyer (1893-1982) or "N.R." as he was known in his professional circle, was much more than a leader-writer for over three decades in a leading newspaper of the country. Discriminating readers all over the country came to know the master-mind that he was through his column "Sotto Voce" first in "Swatantra" and later in "Swarajya" journals of Madras now extinct, which he wrote for 13 years almost without interruption, week after week, from 1946 to 1959. His learning was vast, encyclopaedic in range and depth and his mastery of the English language in all its subtleties and nuances of usage, was truly phenomenal. Satire was Raghunathan's forte as a columnist but one found much else in his writing — irony, humour, righteous indignation, literary evaluations, pen-portraits and delightful cameos of historical events, literary masterpieces and artistic achievements in performing arts. He was at his best as an essayist with seeming casualness but never for once missing the essentials or losing the principal focus of thought, or the thrust of a certain point of view. "Triveni" has carried quite a few of his essays "The Kaveri", "Journalese", "The Artist and His Audience", "Ethics and Politics : The Modern Concept" among others.

N.R. devoted the rest of the 25 years of his life after his retirement from"The Hindu" in 1957 to an English rendering of *Srimad Bhagavata* and the *Valmiki Ramayana*. His translations are unique both in respect of their fidelity to the original and the sustained dignity of style; a classical language like Sanskrit does not suffer the least in the modern English garb. In this article "The World of Valmiki : Two Perspectives" the writer compares some of the ideas of N.R. and the Rt. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri on the *Ramayana*. An interesting point is that it was Sastri who was responsible for N.R. joining "The Hindu" in the early 'Twenties of the present century. — *The Editor*.]

THE "CHILDREN OF THE KAVERI" distinguished themselves in many fields, not the least important being literature and the fine arts which elevated the mind and soul. Countless have been the "Pauraniks" of this part of the country who re-told the stories of the great epics and the Puranas for the edification of the young and the old of several generations. Exposed to such an uplifting influence at a formative age even those who passed through the formal English system of education and pursued ***con amore*** the study of English language

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and literature, returned in the evening of their lives to our ancient lore, particularly the *Ramayana*.

The Rt. Hon. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri (1869 - 1946), who was renowned in his time as the "Silver-tongued orator of the British Empire", and N. Raghunathan (1893-1982), who had few equals as a journalist of profound knowledge and rare artistry with the written word, were easily the most outstanding of them. Sastri delivered thirty lectures on the *Ramayana* during 1944 over a period of seven months at the Sanskrit College, Madras, which were later published in book-form in 1949. Raghunathan rendered into English the *Valmiki Ramayana* in three volumes (running into 1620 pages) which were published in 1981. (The *Ramayana* volumes came after his English rendering of *Srimad Bhagavatam* in two volumes.)

Sastri's lectures and Raghunathan's translation represented not only their intellectual eminence but a fervour to propagate the best of ancient Indian thought that embodied the values of an ageless culture. Sastri was the elder of the two, separated by a decade and four years, but both being contemporaries, know each other well. If Sastri recommended Raghunathan to "The Hindu" in the early 'Twenties, it was Raghunathan who wrote a biographical introduction to the two centenary volumes of Sastri's speeches and writings brought out by the Rt. Hon'ble V.S. Srinivasa Sastri Birth Centenary Committee in 1969.

Yet, no two persons differed so strikingly in their religious perceptions and outlook on life. Influenced by the writings of Huxley, Tyndall and Mill, Sastri lost his faith "in the accustomed rituals and ceremonials" and was inclined to reject or look with scepticism anything that did not stand the test of reason. Raghunathan set much store by his traditional faith and lost no opportunity to emphasise that reason and faith were equally valid as faith formed " an immortal part of him (man), encumbered and held down by the passive weight of flesh and stirs, hearing the voice of silence".

It is said of Sastri that "speaking came to him easier than writing", and this is a defect as well as a merit. The flow of words, the eloquence and the numerous gestures of the speaker are apt to impress an audience much more than the ideas themselves that are sought to be set forth. Speeches made extempore, when reduced to writing and brought out in book-form, often reveal a certain looseness of thought and structure, they lack the compactness of writing which is the result of concentrated thinking and concern for syntactical correctness. Sastri's Ramayana lectures, as Raghunathan has pointed out, suffer from this defect. "A rather excessive preoccupation with detail sometimes blurs the outline; and a literalistic-approach that would be more appropriate to history can have disconcerting results". But this aspect is of less importance than the substance of his lectures in the kind of comparative study that is attempted here.

Sastri had a certain point of view in his lectures which, while making them distinct from the enormous mass of literature on the *Ramayana*, rendered them open to criticism. Sastri looked upon the ***Ramayana*** not as the story — "this most beautiful and moving of all stories in literature" — of Divinity come to earth for upholding Dharma, but of a man with all his faults and foibles though he embodied "the great virtues of human character". Keenly conscious as he was that he would be hurting the feelings of the devout, Sastri was on the defensive in his first lecture, emphasizing the point that, while the essential divinity of Rama could never be forgotten, it was not essential to an understanding of the story or profiting by it. He said, "Robbed as I am of that faith (in the divinity of Rama), I am able to get for the building up of my own nature more from the *Ramayana* than any other student of that book who believes in the divinity of character but is not able for some reason or other to take in the

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real spirit in which the lives were lived." Sastri drove home his point of view in the following words :

"It appears to me that it is no act of impiety to study the ***Ramayana*** as an epic poem concerning human beings. It is an act, on the other hand, which gives to Valmiki his own due, establishes him as a man who held in his mind assuming that he was the one who wrote the story — a clear, fully-formed, full-blooded conception of men and women of superior value to us, of superior moral stature."

Following the line of thought he set for himself, Sastri took up the characters one by one and delineated them with episodic references and here and there giving himself upto the joy of the poetic felicities of Valmiki. Taking up Lakshmana first, he finds him a simple character, quick to lose his temper but equally quick to regain his composure. Not much concerned with Dharma in the abstract, his actions and reactions are governed solely by his devotion to Rama — "Rama was all in all to him, he did not look beyond Rama."

In contrast to Lakshmana's, Sastri finds Rama's character complex. He was almost immaculate but only almost. He had both a higher and a lower nature but his power over nature was not only hidden but put down, conquered — "and this is what makes a world of difference between him and us". Rama was not above the frailties of ordinary human beings who are cast down by great misfortunes. He has his moments of light-heartedness, does act in pursuit of his creed *La gloire* (the creed of Kshatriya), prompted by "jealousy" when he forces Sita to go through the fire ordeal in Lanka and goes against the course of natural justice while killing Vali with a single arrow and hiding behind the trees. Sastri poses the question : "Was Rama the ideal always and the like ones?", and answers, " If so, he was a bloodless robot, an impossible prig mounted on stilts and hardly visible in perspective."

Bharata, according to Sastri, is a character that evoked admiration and respect rather than love. He has a strong individuality, a deal of courage, self-confidence and resoruce. He is also unfilial and his abuse of his mother was scandalous. Bharata **symbolises** *subhratra* — good-brotherliness.

Sastri takes pains to repudiate the criticism that Vibhishana was a 'traitor". "If he took Lanka it was not because he was an ambitious, grasping man, but because the stricken land wanted a wise, righteous ruler. It was in the highest sense of duty and service that he accepted the crown of Lanka, far from being a proof of his selfish ambition, it was a proof of his selflessness."

Sastri looked upon Hanuman as one whose deeds were on the highest level of devotion, rectitude and sense of duty. "Superlatives crowd round Hanuman, as you contemplate him.... wise, moderate in counsel, always ready to see things whilst yet they are only coming, few can approach Hanuman in sheer greatness in weight of achievement." But Sastri would like us to remember that he was after all a monkey and lists what he calls his "failures". Yet he would suggest that his lapses did not really detract from the greatness that was Hanuman's. The defects of a literalistic approach to the story and a desire to put across a point of view that Hanuman's "achievements" represented an effort to get over his "lower nature", are all too apparent in Sastri's delineation of Hanuman. One could see in this the conflict between reason and faith in the mind of Sastri — he would like to uphold the traditional view of Hanuman as "Buddhimataam Varishtam" (the wisest among the wise) and yet let us not forget his simian origin and propensities. The result is not clarity but confusion.

Sastri depicts Ravana as great without being good. He was cruel and cunning, morally reprehensible, but he was great as a warrior, skilful in speech and tactful in his dealings and

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generous in his praise where praise was due. Much of Sastri's account of Ravana is taken up with several episodes in his life. These are no insights into the study of a character next only in importance to that of Rama.

With his well-known feminist sympathies, Sastri reserves his highest praise for Sita. "No woman that I have read of, certainly no woman that I have seen, comes near Valmiki's conception of Sita. She is unapproachable. He has conferred on her all the attractions that a woman could conceivably have. "Beauty, tenderness of heart, compassion of the extreme type, fidelity, wisdom of the truest type, courage of the heart, endurance (what has not Sita endured), all these qualities find in her a harmonious abode. She is a piece of nature like which there was and can be none."

Sastri charges the commentators of the Ramayana with narrow-mindedness when they are critical of Sita's taunts. "My father mated me with a woman in a man's form... To think of your handing me over to Bharata's care! Why, it's the sort of thing a dancer *(sailusha)* does." (The context was Rama's pleading with Sita to stay back in Ayodhya while he went into exile.) At the same time, Sastri expresses the view that it would have been worthy of Sita if she had refrained from saying harsh things to Lakshmana. (What has happened to Sastri's conception of Sita as an ordinary human being with all the faults and weaknesses of a mortal ?)

After dealing with the other characters of the *Ramayana* like Kaikeyi ("a most unlovely character, her name a by-word for inequity"), Kausalya and Sumitra, Sastri exhorts us to enthrone Rama and Sita in our hearts remembering the lessons of their lives. They were not perfect but grew to perfection step by step, from stage to stage. "It is only when we contemplate the hero and heroine as undergoing the trials of life and enjoying all the good things that happened to them, it is only as we watch them through the vicissitudes of their life and make note of the way they profit by these things, that we shall get from the study of the *Ramayana* the utmost advantage that it is capable of giving."

In contrast to Sastri's "human" approach, Raghunathan's is philosophical. Raghunathan would not like to be drawn into the "God *vs* man" debate but, using the text of the *Ramayana* itself, would prefer to go with Bharata and Sita who describe Rama as the Jivan-mukta *par excellence* who transcends all likes and dislikes. He would rather look upon the *Ramayana* effecting a reconciliation between the personal and the impersonal ideals of the Vedanta.

If Sastri chose to exhort us to "enshrine" Rama in our hearts, Raghunathan emphasises that Rama exemplified the principle of "Saranagati Dharma" (Protection to the afflicted). He upheld Dharma as the axis of the universe which revolves round the twin poles of compassion and renunciation — the two dominant notes of the *Ramayana*. The lofty ethic he stands for is that Dharma is all — the Dharma the conception of which is derived from the Vedas. "The *Ramayana* has something pertinent to say on all the aspects of Dharma — its relevance to the social order, the cosmic order, the sense of mutual obligation that brings the universe, together with the Karmic ties, the religious impulse which is the parent of that ethic, and lastly the Adhyatmic Reality to the realisation of which Dharma finds its crown and consummation". The concept of Dharma is a gift of the gods (the Vedas) taught by precept and practice by Rama.

Raghunathan's translation of the ***Ramayana*** in three volumes is a work of scholarly labour spread over many years. He looked upon his work as a debt discharged to the ancient Rishis, ***Rishi runa,*** one of the three specified traditional debts — to the gods, to the seers and to the ancestors. He also occasionally contributed articles on the *Ramayana* to journals and presented papers to learned bodies. In one such paper entitled "The World of

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Valmiki" presented at a meeting of the Madras Sanskrit Academy in 1954, he dealt with the characters of the *Ramayana* much in the manner of Sastri. A summary of his sketches brings out the difference in his approach from that of Sastri.

Sugriva : Raghunathan looks upon the relationship of Rama and Sugriva as an ideal instance of "maitri".

Bharata : Bharata loved Rama, not as Lakshmana did, with the possessive loyalty of a mother, but as one would a venerated exemplar and a pillar of strength. He was steadfast and dispassionate.

Lakshmana : "Lakshmana is not so much a foil to Rama as the mirror of one side of his character, as Bharata is of another." He is the touchstone of Rama's intimate *atma-gunas*.

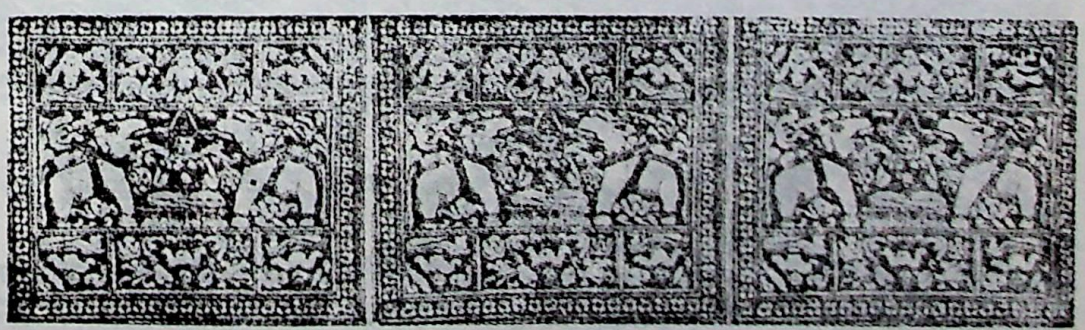
Rama : "Rama is the complete man. All of us, encaged in our imperfections, find it difficult to take him in whole and entire..... But this much is certain, that it is the Visvamitras and the Vasishthas, the Sutikshanas and the Agastyas, the men who have conquered ***raga*** and ***dvesha*** that see him in the round and have an integral apprehension of him". Rama may or may not have been conscious of his divinity but there is no doubt that he looked upon himself as a *Dharma-pratishthapaka*. (Raghunathan does not at all countenance Sastri's view that Rama has two natures, the lower and the higher, and that he subordinated the lower to the higher in course of time.)

Ravana : Ravana was after power. He represented "that hypertrophy of the will which history has made us familiar with in a series of scourges from Alilla to Hitler". Instead of clinging to ***sva-dharma,*** he hugs his ***sva-adharma***, his own besetting sin of pride.

Sita : Sita is that "unbought grace that made duty a delight". She finds in renunciation (when she goes to the forest with Rama) a simple delight and symbolises "pativratya".

Hanuman : Hanuman is the nitya-siddha who discovered hes inner truth and unity. He saw in Rama not the Kshatriya edeal of honour but the splendour of his own self".

Rama is a deity and the *Ramayana* is the story of His life. Valmiki's poem is a classic, the first of all epic poems in world's literature. It is futile to ask anyone brought up from childhood to venerate Rama to look upon Him as a man and take lessons from his life. The story of the *Ramayana* — which seems to have a germ in historical fact — has little in common with the lives that mere mortals lead. It does appear right and proper to look upon the *Itihasa* that is the *Ramayana* as illustrating the ideals, concepts and values of the Vedic culture which is based on Rta, Satya, Dharma and Tapas. The *Ramayana* is not a mere "human document" as Sastri would have it; there is much to be gained by looking upon it as a "Divine Testament" as well.



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GODS

Prof. S. CHANDRASEKHAR

Secularism has only been on our lips.
In its most modern form,
It says not what it does
And does not what it says.

When gods are abused,
Blinded, and usefully blended,
When they are imprisoned
They are as good as dumped.

In a way, they are being banished
Having been tried for ages
They are no better than sages,
And their little importance is ravished.

Man had discovered gods
For a mere solace,
But not for eternal importance
Gods are man's shrouded impotence

They are grounded battle-ships
With lure of gold of the yore,
But totally lacking in adventure,
Mutely moulded matter for worships.

An alibi for ultimate truth
And an apology for consciousness,
When convictions are in a mess
They are hypocricy's real worth.

They don't fight battles any more
Nor do they live by jupiter or jove
For they are nearly dead
And gone on Valhalla's tread.

The ones we have are accursed.
The Ocean of Nectar at Amritsar
Was subjected to Operation Blue Star,
The story of Ayodhya is not afar.

Even God's children are accursed
Bosnia is only an instance, not an end,
Somalia and Ethiopia have experienced
What it is to be a living dead.

Man's collective consciousness
Runs riot when stripped
Of reason, and at journey's end.
When culture is consumed at religion's
crossroad
In the name and altar of righteousness.



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BHABANI BHATTACHARYA
A Writer with a Social Purpose

Prof. K. VENKATA REDDY

THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY preceding the attainment of independence was one of struggle, suffering and hope, and the period following it has witnessed unexpected trials and tribulations, but, in spite of them, valiant efforts have been made to create a new order. Bhabani Bhattacharya, who passed away in October, 1988, is one of the foremost among Indian writers who have dealt with these epoch-making events. In the death of Bhattacharya India has lost one of the best writers of fiction who was at once a realist and a visionary, an artist and a propagandist with his genuine concern for society, his passionate plea for the synthesis of modern and traditional values, and, above all, his positive affirmatiion of life.

Though born in the same decade of the twentieth century in which Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao were born, Bhabani Bhattacharya arrived rather late on the literary scene. Yet, he has caught up with his contemporaries and enriched Indian fiction in English and has earned for himself his rightful place as a world-class writer. A man of multitudinous interests, he has made his mark not only as a novelist but also as a translator, creative historian, biographer and as a short story writer.

Born on the 10th of November, 1906 in Bhagalpur (Bihar) to Promotho and Kiranbala Bhattacharya, Bhabani Bhattacharya belonged to a well-to-do and educated family. He had his schooling at Puri and joined Patna University for his undergraduate studies. After his Bachelor's degree with Honours in English Literature in 1927, he left for England to study at the University of London. After taking his Ph.D. degree in History, he returned to India in December, 1934. His marriage with Salila Mukherji in 1935 proved to be a boon to his literary career. He became in 1950 Press Attache to the Embassy of India in America where he spent the rest of his life as an active creative writer. He was appointed a Visiting Professor in 1971 in the University of Hawaii where he wrote his last novel, *A Dream in Hawaii*.

Happily, Bhabani Bhattacharya was heir to the cultural riches of two worlds — East and West. As a writer, he was greatly influenced by Tagore and Gandhi as well as by Shakespeare and Steinbeck. If Bhattacharya's deep interest in Gandhiji is evidenced in his book, ***Gandhi the Writer*** (1969), the profound impress of Gurudev on him is revealed indirectly in his novels and directly in his two translations of Tagore's stories and articles ***The Golden Boat*** (1932) and ***Towards Universal Man (1961)***. Some of the other writers who had impact on him were Marx, Ibsen, Shaw, Whitman and Sinclair Lewis. Throughout his years in London, he was close to the Marxist group and became an active member of the

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Marxist-associated League Against Imperialism, among whose noted leaders was Jawaharlal Nehru.

We have in Bhabani Bhattacharya a sincere writer with a serious, social purpose. He declared:

> I hold that a novel must have a social purpose. It must place before the reader something from the society's point of view.

He openly disapproved of the purposeless art, and literature. He believes not in "Art for art's sake" but in "Art for life's sake". He promulgated:

> Art must teach, but unobtrusively, by its vivid interpretation of life. Art must preach, but only by virtue of its being vehicle of truth. If that is propaganda, there is no need to eschew the word.

So, according to Bhattacharya an artist has every right to plead and to work for a better world provided his commitment to a cause does not impair the value of his art as art. His fictional theory and practice show his affinity with Mulk Raj Anand.

If Anand is a revolutionary social realist, Bhattacharya is a reformist social realist. His novels, naturally, deal with social, political, economic and religious problems of the country. His art being purposive, the novel in his hands becomes an instrument of social change. He has, however, succeeded in his attempt to bring about a harmonious fusion of his social concerns and artistic values.

Bhattacharya's first novel, *So Many Hungers* (1947), originated from his profound response to the Indian situation in 1942-43 during which, he felt, the soul of India underwent a sudden development through a multi-dimensional experience. Set against the background of the Quit India movement and the Bengal famine, the novel deals with the theme of exploitation — political, economic and social. The "So Many Hungers" are those for political freedom, for money, for food, for sex and for human dignity. The novel deals with many things that are depressing, but still it is not a depressing book. On the one hand is the panorama of men and women emaciated by hunger and in rags, but on the other, we have glimpses into the hearts and souls of human beings and find therein abundant love, purity, strength and hope. The novel is a moving and impressive work of art.

Bhattacharya's second novel, *Music for Mohini* (1952), is a forward-looking one in which the author dwells on certain sociological aspects of Indian life. It is the story of Mohini, "a city-bred, village-wed girl" and her adjustment to her new life-style. The novelist makes an attempt to connect our old Eastern view of life with the new Semi-Western outlook, an attempt to wed the "horoscope" with the "microscope".

Bhattacharya's third novel, *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1955) reverts to the theme of the Bengal hungers. It tells the story of Kalo, a poor blacksmith, who, jailed for stealing a bunch of bananas, vows revenge on society. It highlights the growing protest in the country, the protest against economic exploitation and casteism. The dissociation of sensibility that has set in *Music for Mohini* is aggravated in *He Who Rides a Tiger*, and the strategy of fantasy that the author uses for riding the tiger of social purposiveness takes him nearer to R.K. Narayan's *The Guide*.

Bhattacharya's next novel, *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960), awakens the people to social, political and national responsibilities. Exploiting the techniques of allegory and symbolism, the novelist warns the people against profiteers and capitalists, amulets and magic formulas to solve social problems and suggests that only real acts of kindness and generosity can bring about the national good.

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Shadow from Ladakh (1967), Bhattacharya's fifth novel and winner pf the Sahitya Akademi award for 1967, is set against the background of the Chinese aggression against India in October, 1962. The novel allegorizes Bhattacharya's final vision of the regeneration of India by describing the conflict between Gandhigram and Steeltown, symbolizing the opposing ideals of soul power *versus* armed power, asceticism *versus* full-blooded satisfaction of life's urges, and village economy *versus* large scale industrialism. The novelist approves the use of modern technology for the well-being of individuals and society, yet without divorcing spiritual values.

In his last and most distinct novel, *A Dream in Hawaii* (1978), Bhattacharya extends his vision beyond the problems of India to the problems of the sick Western civilization of today. The novel analyses these problems by juxtaposing the values of spiritual India with those of the permissive society in America. Bhattacharya scores a fresh triumph in this novel by breaking new ground in structural vitality and striking a right balance of the sensuous and the sublime thereby investing it with a deeper philosophical, cultural and social significance.

Bhattacharya's other writings, *The Golden Boat* and *Towards Universal Man*, which are collections of stories, essays or articles by Tagore translated into English, bear witness to his ability and skill as a translator. *Indian Cavalcade* (1948), a collection of episodes from Indian History, displays his descriptive power, vivid portrayal of character and dramatic talent. In *Gandhi, the Writer* we gain fresh insights into Gandhi as we view his character through a prism of views.

The most successful of Bhattacharya's works, other than the novels, is *Steel Hawk and Other Stories* (1968), a collection of fifteen short stories. The stories show considerable variety of theme and tone ranging from light-hearted comedy to sombre tragedy, from flights of sheer fancy to the keen observation of facts and from a study of monkey's mind to the exploration of the depths of the human soul.

To conclude, Bhabani Bhattacharya is a novelist with a highly developed social consciousness. With the exception of Mulk Raj Anand, he is the only Indian novelist writing in English who has made a conscious effort in artistically highlighting the problems of the poor, and in eradicating superstitions, blind beliefs, taboos and other unwholesome aspects of rural society. He has also artistically expressed his opposition to the exploitation in the name of religion and caste. He has successfully exposed in terms of fictional art the perpetration of cruelty and injustice on the rural masses. At the same time, he has taken every care to project a positive affirmation of life in every one of his novels.

Bhattacharya's achievement as a novelist lies not only in the choice and handling of themes, manipulation of plot, narrative technique and art of characterization but also in moulding the English language to suit his artistic purpose. He shaped the English language as a suitable medium to convey Indian sensibility by giving it a flavour of the soil, a touch of the vernacular and by making it distinctly Indian even if it has a foreign make.

Bhabani Bhattacharya, however, is more than an Indian writer of note. With his novels translated into as many as twenty-six foreign languages, he has already emerged as a world-class novelist. The English editions of his novels have been published abroad and are being read throughout the English-speaking world. These translations are an ample proof of the universal appeal of Bhattacharya's work. The main reason for this universal appeal lies in the archetypal motifs that Bhattacharya has objectified in his fiction. The most dominant of these motifs is the quest motif which lies at the centre of all great literatures. ●

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FIRDAUSI'S LETTER TO GHAZINI MOHAMMAD

(When the Sultan broke his promise of paying the poet in gold for the epic.)

GURRAM JOSH UA
Translated from the original in Telugu by
B. THEODORE

[Firdausi (940-1032) was a famous Persian poet. He was also known as Abul Kasim Mansur. Mohammad Ghazini, Sultan of Afghanistan, requested Firdausi to write the story of his ancestors and promised to pay a Dinar (gold coin) for each couplet. Firdausi completed in thirty years the magnificent book — *Shaanaame* — containing 60,000 couplets. With high expectation Firdausi presented the great book to Sultan Ghazini. Instead of honouring the poet with gold coins, as promised, Ghazini sent him the coins in silver. Greatly humiliated and disappointed, Firdausi expressed his indignation in a letter to the Sultan in strong terms and refused to accept the silver coins. The infuriated Sultan ordered to behead Firdausi. Firdausi fled the kingdom to his native village Tulu. After a time the Sultan repented for his folly and sent the promised gold coins to Firdausi. But unfortunately by the time the persons with the coins entered the village through one gate, the corpse of Firdausi passed through the opposite gate to the burial ground. His daughter proudly refused to accept the coins and sent them back to the Sultan. The Sultan, grieved at the tragic turn of events, built a choultry in the name of Firdausi at the village as a mark of expiation for his sin. The following is the English rendering of the verses from "Firdausi" a popular Khandakaavya by *Padmabhushan* G. Josh ua, a renowned modern poet of Andhra Pradesh. — *Editor*]

O Sultan Mohammad ! the spurious lightnings
I believed and built a palace of hope
which now has become an empty firmament,
Usurping my all, collapsed in hell,
In vain I stand in a world of grief.

The sin of offering my poetic nectar
To Sultans that possess stony hearts,
who offer humans as food to swords,
Reacted on me, how can I get
The money destroyed by willful sin.

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Ink in my quill has remained to write;
mournful ditties devoid of rapture;
Unfortunate I am, my strength declined,
The demon of age enveloped my body;
These tears of despair have become the fruit
Of literary service for thirty years.

Each verse a drop of blood consumed
From my body; in vain I wrote;
Will the noble king thus utter lies?
Will he not pay my money he owes?
Alas! I knew not this truth before,
O! Sultan of Ghazni ! Mohammad the great.

By Allah you promised O trickster ! but tried
To pay me in silver for poesy of gold;
Will Allah be pleased with worship of yours?
He that keeps his promise, O king!
He is human and blessed on earth.

A beauteous palace I built for your fame,
Longevity I endowed to your family tree;
But now I retire with empty hands
Drowned in darkness; my peace has gone;
O Sultan! I wander hereafter in woods
Dreadfully dark and full of grief.

A slave I anointed forever on earth,
Pouring on him perfumes of Jasmines;
O rude heartless king ! can gold be drawn
From counterfeit galloon on earth at all ?
I poured myself down on my head
Everlasting burning coals of sorrow.

Now I repose on sepulchre beds
Along with Mohammadan kings that rest;
After a thirty-year drudge my heart is weary;
No place for peace in me from now,
My poesy that spread the moonlight bright
Mendacious king! O you have got.

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JEWISH VISION IN "MORE DIE OF HEARTBREAK"

Dr. G. NEELAKANTAN

SAUL BELLOW'S *More Die of Heartbreak* [1] (1987) articulates a powerful dialectic against the nihilistic despair of most contemporary Western literature. It tells the story of Benn, an eminent botanist, whose misalliance with Matilda Laymon, a rich beauty, takes him to the abyss of existential despair. Kenneth Trachtenberg, narrator and nephew of Benn, provides moral commentary on Benn's actions. Eventually, the protagonist Benn leaves for the North Pole to observe lichens surviving against odds there. Symbolic in purport, this means that for all the "cosmic coldness of life" it is still possible that human values are not wholly dead.

Affirmative in tone, *More Die of Heartbreak* exhibits a distinct Jewish sensibility at work. The Jewishness of this novel, however, is not demonstrably manifested in the protagonist's rhetoric but often forms the substratum of his consciousness. It is this Jewish consciousness which redeems the protagonist from the clutches of nihilistic despair and illumines his quest for the enduring.

As in other novels of Bellow, the kind of Jewish milieu depicted here is assimilated in character. Such inevitable dissolution into the broth of the WASP culture is much bemoaned by Kenneth, a *la* Bellow : "As to Jews, for centuries they combined antiquity with modernity. You could almost see the archaic man in a contemporary Jew. But America has broken all that down". (317) Essentially, the process of assimilation has divested a Jew of all his "chosen" glory and left him a victim of the historical forces. However, it is still possible that remnants of his elevated past might operate unconsciously in a Jew trapped in the contemporary American wasteland.

It is Benn Crader and his nephew Kenneth in whom the dynamics of their ancestral Jewish faith emerges attesting to certain unassimilable traits in their capacity as Jews. Excepting Benn and Kenneth all other Jewish characters are almost wholly assimilated into the WASP world. Thus, Benn and Kenneth preserve at the core of their hearts certain values — not always clear about it themselves — which are recognisably Jewish. To disburden the consciousness of its clutter gathered among the Gentiles becomes a compulsive need for them. Triggered by it, they dive into the mysterious zones of the self and discover there the reserves of Jewish moral stamina. This awareness of the "deeper sources" of life ushers in them a larger clarity in vision.

Bellow unmistakably operates a dialectic of values in *More Die of Heartbreak* as in

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his other novels. It is clear that in showing the paltriness of the WASP values, Bellow implicitly argues for certain values embodied in his protagonist which are Jewish. While death and despiar haunt the WASP consciousness, the surfacing Jewish consciousness in Benn moves towards those impulses celebrated in the Judaic religion. The differences between these two value-systems are developed at various levels. An investigation of the essential Jewish sensibility of his protagonist would throw light on the distinctions between these rival traditions.

The most Jewish trait observed in Bellow's protagonist is his intense family feeling. In *More Die of Heartbreak,* this particular quality is shown in relief aginst the disjointed fragmentary nature of the family structure in the WASP and the assimilated Jewish milieu. To cite an instance, relationship among the Trachtenbergs is devoid of deep filial feelings. Similarly, in the Layamon family the relationship is sophisticated enough not to betray any feelings. The wealthy Vilitzers maintain business-like relations with one another and there is also evidence of permanent estrangement as between Vilitzer and his son Fishl. In such a loveless world, it is Benn who carries the chalice of love with devotion. Cherishing fond memories of childhood at Jefferson street, he is still a child at heart trying to perpetuate love and togetherness. Knowing full well that his uncle, Vilitzer, had defrauded him a lot of his money, he is yet large-hearted enough to forgive him.

The death of Vilitzer brings him remorse because he had brought pressure to bear on him, having been instigated by the Layamons to recover his share of wealth. Benn's family feeling is distinguished by its sentimentality and a deep need to reflect on the remote origins of his race. Through Kenneth, it is learnt that Benn "was a man of feeling, especially family feeling, and pious about his parents" (18). Narrating his inner feeling at the death of Vilitzer, Benn says : " But when the rabbi began to chant the *El Malai Rachamim* at the conclusion, I lost control and started to sob, thinking whether the God of Mercy would ever receive the likes of Harold's soul" (328). What Matilda says in disgust at his supposed hang-ups about the Jewish past truly signifies Benn's love of his roots : " But you have this steerage mentality — you've got the whole Russian-Hebrew Arabic routine, and this includes Egypt and the Babylonian captivity. Let's try to be a little more real. (125) For Benn who believes that it is "love that makes reality reality." It is the past which is real and the present would become so only when he succeeds in investing it with love.

A major feature of the redeeming Jewish vision in *More Die of Heartbreak* consists in the use of the schlemiel figure. Like Moses Herzog, Benn is an academic schlemie — high-minded but confused precisely for the same reason. He represents innocence of a king which is necessary for the perpetuation of life. Benn is pitted against a world which has made up its mind on all the important questions of life. However, he fails to be disparaged by the rebuffs of the world and persists in his quest for the eternal. While his innocence fails him in matters of the world and makes him a laughing -stock, it also ensures his kinship with the "Citizen(s) of Eternity" (69). Benn's chronicle of illtreatment at the hands of the tough wastelanders Vilitzer and the Layamons is owing to this particular quality of innocence. His failure with women also arises out of it.

Ellen Pifer perceptively highlights this aspect in arguing : " The novel focuses on the familiar Bellow situation of the intelligent man totally inept and victimized in his relationships with women; as usual, this situation is part of the larger one of the simple hearted man among the Machiavellians.[2] Paradoxically, Benn's recovery from the grisly perils of the wasteland is also attributable to it. Keneth's father considers Benn's a "schiump." Somebody who is "incompetent" and becomes a "fun figure" for the

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same reason (39). Admirer of Benn though, Kenneth himself sees him as a "schnook" (119) when Benn becomes ecstatic about Matilda. However, the deception that Benn undergoes is a necessary phase before he attains to a firm grip on his life.

To conclude, ***More Die of Heartbreak*** assigns the Jewish experience a vital role in evolving a positive world view that counters the excesses of the wasteland outlook. Benn Crader, the protagonist, signifies the moral approach of the Judaic way of life and this moral consciousness guides him through chaos into clarity. An integral part of his affirming world view, Bellow's Jewish sensibility develops a masculine if qualified affirmation of life. There is no escape into the pastorals or into meek worlds of religious abstractions : there is an acceptance of the earthly life as it is and a commitment to work for betterment, since "heaven is always earth redeemed" to the realistic Jewish mind.

NOTES

1. Saul Bellow. ***More Die of Heartbreak*** (London : Alison Press, Secker & Werburg, 1987 : rpt. New York : Panguin Books, 1988). Subsequent page numbers for quotations from the novel will be given in parentheses in the text.

2. Ellen Pifer, Saul Bellow : Against the Grain (Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1990), 70.

THE PARTING WORDS

YOGESH G. NAIR

Some discussions,
And currency notes,
Are enough,
To let us be,
On different streets, my son,
You are young,
Tender, and playful,
And long
For my love and care,
But the efforts,
Of these men to earn,
Force mothers like me
To be away, from their kids,

Though the desire
To live and enjoy life,
With no greed or fight,
And let each day be,
Filled with love,
Charm and perfection
Is there in every cow,
We are helpless, son,
For we are timid and mute.

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NGUGI : THE REBEL

P. V. KONDAL RAO and V. JAGAM

THE DARKNESS ALONG the African shore and of the African people suddenly found a beaconlight in Ngugi wa Thiong'o, as he followed the path of African legends against European Alien rulers. Ngugi's novels form a landmark, a recreation of Kikuyu's past and history from an African perspective in dislodging the colonialism in Kenya-Ngugi records the destructive impact of colonialism on the integrity of traditional life and he is interested in the exploration of an inner state for Africans.

As a native writer of East Africa and as a product of colonial experience, by virtue of keener sensibility, Ngugi understands the subversive impact that colonization has had on the colonial's consciousness. His novels made an attempt to sensitize the African people to the fact of their own identity and tried to awaken them to the need to free themselves of complexes by rejecting blind imitation of Western values.

An East African rebel, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, was born in Kenyan Gikuyu highlands in 1938 at Limuru. He is the best known of Kenyan writers. His works delineated the crisis and contradictions faced by the African people. Ngugi is militant and controversial and his works show the perceptive African sentiments. His works emphasize the African need to fight for their self-respect.

East Africa's unique colonial experience is evoked in its literature. Africans in Uganda and Tanzania were not estranged from their land as it happened in Kenya. The impact of extensive European settlement necessitated detraction of ethnic cultures and urban alienation on a large and rapid scale in East Africa. Kenya, the native country of Ngugi, has the distinction of animating the peasantry against this alienation with Mau, Mau and other mass struggles. As a Kenyan, Ngugi inherited the mantle of Kenyan cultural character and proceeded towards 'Uhuru'. Liberation from the Europeans and the neo-colonizers has become an ethnic desideratum of Kenya and Ngugi.

Ngugi's *Weep not, child* (1964) and *The River Between* (1965) inspired other novelists to emphasize historical and political themes. *Weep not, child* is a delicate story and it is set in the period when white settlers deprived the Gikuyu of most of their traditional land. Defiance in *Weep not, child* is presented through Njoroge, the young son of a farm worker, Ngotho, when he wanted to study instead of farming for the white man. Njoroge's fight with white men, his interest and faith in the liberating quality of education could not live upto the needs since he had to study the alien subjects in the European language.

His ambition for studies and his dislike towards white man's values can be found in his words, when he asked his mother,

> O, mother, I'll never bring shame to you.
> Just let me get there, just let me.[1]

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Weep not, child produces a sense of revolt in Njoroge as a reflection of the inner voice of Ngugi.

"The River Between" is distinctive from Ngugi's former novel and it is a sensitive novel about Kenyan tribes. It deals with the disruptive effect of the Christian missionary activity on the traditional life of African Studies. It remains as a trial against colonialism when the prophecy of the white men was paid a close attention by the Negroes with a view to fighting with it.

> Arise. Held the prophecy. Go to the mission place. Learn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white man. But do not follow his vices. Be true to your people and the lancient rites.[2]

Chege's call of insurgency to his young son Waiyaki can be taken as a revolutionary step in attaining the liberation.

A Grain of Wheat is demarcated against struggle for political independence in Kenya. It substantiates Ngugi's cynical portrayal of African history. It is set with Mau, Mau era of struggles. Rebellion is found in this novel in the Uhuru celebrations when people tried to chastise Karanja for his excesses. The insurgency in *A Grain of Wheat* can be treated as the struggle-oriented sense of Africans, since it mirrors a society of African values and Africanized culture. As a part of it, Mugo, the protagonist in this novel has conceded to the cleverness of Africans, when he wants to impose colonial culture on Africans. In the end Mumbi's words close the novel with the new attitude required for a new Kenya.

> People try to rub things out, but they cannot. Things are not so easy. What has passed between us is too much to be passed over in a sentence. We need to talk, to open our hearts to one another, examining them, and then together plan the future we want.[3]

Ngugi's commitment to restore character to his history was symbolised in 1970 in the change of his name from James Ngugi to Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

Ngugi's introduction to his work *Home coming* clearly indicates the integration of his ideas and influence of other writers on him. *Home coming* presents Ngugi's views on African culture, politics, church and society. He gave a clarion call to Africans to unite and to overcome the confusion in values which were resulting in a drastic change in political, economic and cultural ethos. He called on them to realize the need of a society, where an African will be recognized as such.

The importance of culture in a suppressed society is stressed in *Home coming* and Ngugi believed in a national culture where the African flag flew high. Negritude in *Home coming* was enlightened with Ngugi's call to ban the Alien studies, which he opines, is imposing colonialism on Africans.

> The Colonial system produced the kind of educaition which nurtured subservience, self-hatred and mutual suspicion. It produced a people uprooted from the masses.[4]

Ngugi's anger for colonialism is found in the above words and thus he called the students for a study that was without racial discrimination.

Ngugi's later novels *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross* show his studied insubordination towards the corrupt ruling elite of Africa.

Petals of Blood is constructed on a grand epic scale, which presents a comprehensive analysis of the evils perpetrated on independent African society by the black imperialism.

Petals of Blood expresses Ngugi's radicalization and anger towards capitalism. It en-

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visages a popular uprising of the people against the new masters in Kenya. Ngugi intentionally used it as an instrument for generating political awareness. He projected defiance through "wanja", a prostitute woman and "karega" the bright young teacher, through whom he focussed the revival of African culture.

Devil on the Cross drew the African voice on the sheets of toilet-papers in the prison. It is a book of political interests, in which Ngugi's dedication reads "to all Kenyans struggling against the neo-colonial stage of imperialism".

The protagonist of this novel "Wariinga" represents an affirmative and ruthless class struggle against neo-colonial aptitudes, as a part of underground workers' movement. She represents the emergent classes in New Kenya. Ngugi by means of *Wariinga* focussed the insurrection, and she is presented as a worker, but not as an object of economic or sexual exploitation. She is typical of characters Ngugi hopes to create, in which he succeeded to a certain extent.

Ngugi's mutiny towards capitalism and imperialism is registered in ***Detained***, a prison diary. ***Detained*** is a book of prison notes. Through *Detained* Ngugi wanted to project the African problems in a neo-colonial society. And he accomplished the projection of false values adopted by them with an awakening call to the Negroes against the imperialist rulers.

Ngugi's dramas synthesize indigenous forms of music, dance and mime. A new type of political and social drama is evidenced in Ngugi's ***The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*** and ***I will Marry When I Want.***

Political revolution in African circles has been fostered with the use of indigenous languages in drama. And Ngugi staged his dramas with rural cultures as a part of portraying social reformist aspects. ***The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*** is of Gikuyu origin. The correct revolutionary rhetoric has been used in it. Kenyan freedom struggle is told with much force and conviction in this drama. It deals with the trials of one of the celebrated leaders of Mau, Mau revolution. Ngugi, with Micere Mugo sung the praises of the deeds of Kimathi the hero of the resistance, who refused to surrender to the British imperialism.

The suppressive measures of the European rulers were defied in an angry procession by the defiant blacks in ***The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*** where Ngugi presented the crowd's anger in a song.

Leader : Away with Oppression!
Unchain the peole !

Crowd : Away with Oppression !
Unchain the people!

Leader : Away with Exploitation !
Unchain the people !

Crowd : Away with Exploitation !
Unchain the people !

Leader : Away with human Slaughter !

Crowd : Unchain the people

Leader : Brothers, we shall break.

Crowd : Exploiter's Chains!

Leader : Rally round the gun.

Crowd : Make a new earth [5]

Ngugi wanted to take revenge on the exploitatory Europeans and the rebellion of Africans was presented in the Crowd's Voice.

Kimathi, the hero of this drama, felt colonialism as the jungle of exploitation, and oppression as the eternal law of colonizers, which humiliated and insulted the blacks, and awakened the African's in the Court to

"Fight
Struggle
Change." [6]

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The Voice of Kimathi saw the British as traitors to their own people and called on them to come out of slavery.

Apart from this, *I Will Marry When I Want* is the most powerful of Ngugi's works. This is the renowned play which is developed with Kikuyu actors, in which colonialism was quoted as the Satan of Poverty, of theft, of robbery, and of oppression ; and people in this were called to crush that enemy in a song.

Soloist : The Satan of Poverty
Must be crushed !

Chorus : Hallelujah, he must be Crushed,
For the Second Coming is near.

Soloist : He destroys our homes,
Let's Crush him.

Chorus : Hallelujah let's crush and grind him, for the Second coming is near.[7]

The power and irony with which the European colonizers and neo-colonizers of Africa were attacked show Ngugi's concern for the Kenyans and Africans.

Rebellion in this drama found a solution in the people's song when the trumpet of the masses has been blown of land grabbing, exploitation, slavery and charity and abuses.

"All : The trumpet of the poor has been blown

Let's unite and organize.

Organization is our club
Organization is our sword
Organization is our gun
Organization is our shield
Organization is our way
Organization is our strength
Organization is our light
Organization is our wealth.

The trumpet of the masses has been blown. [8]

Ngugi saw the broken barriers of Colonialism in Crowd's joy : and his works lit African darkness from the new sated core of earth.

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4. Home Coming by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (Heinemann) 1972. P. 14
5. Trial of Dedan Kimathi by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o Micere Mugo (Heinemann) 1976. P. 5
6. -Ibid-
7. I Will Marry When I Want by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (Heinemann) 1982. P. 5,6
8. Ibid by Ngugi Wa Mirii. P. 116



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Prof. CHANDRASEKHAR

The Nobel Laureate

A. RANGANATHAN

BEFORE I DEAL with his life story as well as his scientific work, I wish to refer to an interview which gives us an idea of the Chandrasekhar cast of mind. "My approach to objectives in science", remarked Professor Chandrasekhar in a memorable interview, "is rather like a sculptor who likes to create a structure, which has the stamp of his personality. Once he has finished the structure, he does not go on chiselling it here and there for the rest of his life".

Again the topics which have suited his temperament are — *Stellar Structure, Stellar Dynamics, Radiative Transfer, Hydrodynamic and Hydromagnetic Stability, Ellipsoids, Post-Newtonian Approximations* and *Black Holes.* His well-known style — *The Chandrasekhar Style* — is to change his field of specialization and to write the definitve work in the field at the end of each such period. Perhaps it is this *Chandrasekhar Style* which is the creative source of his scientific longevity. And in the process he has written a series of celebrated volumes : *An Introduction to the Study of Stellar Structure* (1939), *Principles of Stellar Dynamics* (1942), *Radiative Transfer* (1950), *Plasma Physics* (1960), *Hydrodynamic and Hydromagnetic Stability* (1961), *Ellipsoidal Figures of Equilibrium* (1969), and *The Mathematical Theory of Black Holes* (1983) which have won him such distinctions as the 1944 Fellowship of the Royal Society, the 1947 Adams Prize of Cambridge University, the 1952 Bruce Medal of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, the 1953 Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society, the 1957 Rumford Medal of the American Academy of the Arts and Science, the 1962 Royal Medal of the Royal Society of London, the 1962 Srinivasa Ramanujan Medal of the Indian National Science Academy, the 1966 American National Academy of Science, the 1968 Padmavibushan Award of the Government of India, the 1971 Henry Draper Medal of the National Academy of Sciences, the 1973 Smoluchowski Medal of the Polish Physical Society, the 1974 Dannie Heineman Prize of the American Physical Society, the 1983 Nobel Prize for Physics and the 1984 Copley Medal of the Royal Society of London.

And as a result of a heart problem (which necessitated major surgery and was happily solved) Chandrasekhar could not sustain his usual pattern of style on work for a while. For a work which ought to have been entitled *The Post-Newtonian Approximations and the Stability of the Relativistic Stars* was regretably never written. In the normal circumstances, it ought to have published in 1975. And his spell in Chicago includes his tenure as the Editor of the *Astrophysical Journal* from 1952 to 1971.

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Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar was born at Lahore on October 19, 1910. The first six years of his life were spent at Lahore. And two more years were spent at Lucknow before Chandrasekhar returned to Madras. He has a distinguished family background. His great grandfather — his father's grandfather — had as ayoung man walked all tthe way from Trichinopoly to Nadia in Bengal, in order to study Nyaya. His father Shri C.S. Ayyar, was a member of the I.A. & A.S., — second to the Railways — and an authority on the Grammar of Carnatic Music. His uncle — his father's younger brother — was Sir C.V.Raman, the first Asian scientist to win the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1930.

As Lord Snow remarks somewhere, "As a rule, mathematical talent shows itself at a very early age". Not surprisingly, Chandra was an accomplished mathematician even while studying at Hindu High School. The scene shifted to Presidency College, Madras — the same institution where his father and uncle studied — to do his Intermediate. And he joined the Physics Honours Course at Presidency College in 1927. Here it is necessary to stress that Chandrasekhar had a particularly distinguished career — academically speaking, as a student and as a research scientist. To sum it up in a phrase, it was due to Chandrasekhar's interaction with Arnold Sommerfeld, Werner Heisenberg and M.N. Saha, as well as an exchange of letters with Professor Ralph Fowler. At this point, one must emphasize the uniqueness of the Madras University Honours Course. For it allowed a good deal of academic freedom in the pursuit of one's chosen disciplines.

Chandrasekhar's career as a research scientist began in the wake of his meeting with Arnold Sommerfeld in 1928. Sommerfeld was a contemporary of Einstein and his students included such celebrities as Debye, Pauli, Bethe, Unsold and Heisenberg. Young Chandra told Sommerfeld that he had studied the English translation of his work on Atomic Structure and Special Lines. During this conversation Sommerfeld had introduced Chandra to the new world of contemporary physics — the discovery of wave mechanics by Schroedinger as well as the new developments triggered off by Heisenberg, Dirac, Pauli and others. He also gave him copies of his papers on the electron theory of metals — actually Sommerfeld had worked out the behaviour of electrons inside a metal by applying the Fermi-Dirac Statistics. This paper inspired Chandrasekhar to write his celebrated paper *Compton Scattering and the New Statistics.*

In fact Chandrasekhar postulated the inverse Compton Effect in respect of Stellar interiors where very high energy electrons exist. Indeed this paper — entitled *Compton Scattering and the New Statistics* — was published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society in London in 1929. His first paper on *Thermodynamics and the Compton Effect with reference to the Interior of the Stars* was published in the *Indian Journal of Physics* in 1928. Furthermore as a student he had published two more papers — *The Ionization Formula and the New Statistics* and on *The Probability Method in the New Statistics Philosophical Magazine* in 1930. And he also secured record marks in the Physics Honours of the Madras University in 1930 — First Class, First in the Madras Presidency.

These achievements resulted in three developments:

1. Young Chandra presented a preliminary account of his Royal Society Paper at the January 1929 session of the Indian Science Congress. Soon Chandra has savoured the excitement of Raman's discovery at Calcutta in 1929. And it was followed by a rewarding session with Heisenberg.

2. Chandrasekhar attended the Indian Science Congress Association in Allahabad, in January 1930. By this time, he had elected to become a theoretical astrophysicist. Possibly

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because of the prize which was awarded to him: ***The Internal Constitution of the Stars*** by Eddington. It was pleasant surprise for Chandrasekhar to be told by Saha that he was familiar with his work.

3. The net result of all this work was obvious — Chandra was awarded the Government of India scholarship to do research at Trinity College, Cambridge.

While dwelling on his career at Cambridge, I wish to discuss the Yeatsian concept of luck. "The English Poets" observed Yeats, "do not believe in luck". For instance, according to Yeats, Wordsworth was lucky on two occasions in his life "that is when he composed his famous pieces: ***Tintern Abbey and The Ode on Intimations of Immortality.*** Einstein himself was lucky, in this sense, during the first half of his career — the Quantun explanation of the photoelectric effect which won him the Nobel Prize for physics in 1921, the statistical law governing the phenomenon of Brownian Motion and the Special Theory of Relativity which neatly amalgamated space, time and matter into one fundamental unity, were written in 1906.

He was lucky once again in 1916. For he was able to generalize the Special Theory to include the Gravitational Field in formulating his celebrated General Theory of Relativity. And yet Einstein was unable to unify electromagnetic and gravitational forces even after several decades of hard work. In other words, one can be lucky or inspired once or twice in one's life — there are, of course, exceptions to this rule like Shakespeare and Newton. Interestingly enough Sommerfeld's initial response to Einstein's Theory of General Relativity was not favourable. Einstein himself was not reconciled to the uncertainty Principle of Heisenberg and the Bohr-Heisenberg Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics. And when luck deserts a creative genius, there is a sort of an intellectual hardening of the arteries !

Combining Einstien's Special Theory of Relativity and then the new Quantum Mechanics in 1930 (Chandra was then 19 while voyaging through the Mediterranean Sea), he demonstrated that if the mass of the star exceeded a certain critical mass (greater than approximately 1.4 times the mass of the sun) the star would not become a white dwarf. It would continue to collapse under the extreme pressure of gravitational forces. In 1935 (Chandra was a Fellow of Trinity, at that point of time), he established this critical mass condition, currently known as *Chandrasekhar's Limit*— based on rigorous mathematical reasoning — and reported the results at a meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society of London. Chandrasekhar's findings raised two fundamental questions: 1. What happens to the more massive stars when they continue to collapse? 2. Are there several terminal stages of stars other than that of white dwarfs ?

Eddington was not able to grasp the far-reaching consequences of an elegant application of Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity, which was at the core of Chandrasekhar's discovery. This was a trifle surprising, owing to Sir Arthur Eddington's impeccable credentials. Indeed Eddington made the great discovery that the luminosity of a star depends mainly on its mass. Obviously it is possible to determine the luminosity of a star when one calculates its distance. Apart from making this great discovery, Eddington led the expedition to the island of Principe off the coast of West Africa in 1919, in order to photograph the stars which were visible near the sun when it was eclipsed. Eddington's verification of the General Theory constitutes a part of modern scientific history. Again Eddington's personal relations with Chandrasekhar were cordial. Indeed Eddington and Milne were partly responsible for electing Chandrasekhar as a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1944.

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Perhaps the Eddington-Chandrasekhar controversy must be viewed in the larger perspective of scientific controversies. For, just as Niels Bohr was involved in an historic controversy with Einstein, so was Chandrasekhar engaged in an equally historic controversy with Eddington. Interestingly enough, the similarities are striking. Although Einstein rejected the statistical reasoning underlying the nature of the Quantun Theory. Similarly, according to Meerea, Eddington who supported Einstein at a time when some great scientists did not accept the General Theory of Relativity rejected Chandrasekhar's *Theory of Stellar Degeneracy* on the ground that Chandra did not treat the star as a single molecule in relativistic terms. The irony lay in the fact that Chandrasekhar's Theory had contributed to the mathematical underpinnings governing the astrophysics of Black Holes as a logical extension of the General Theory of Relativity.

In his paper *Beauty and the Quest for Beauty in Science,* Chandrasekhar refers to the fact that Eddington made this remark in the wake of a controversial discussion : "You look at it from the point of view of the star ; I look at it from the point of view of Nature".

Here are two characteristic judgements delivered by Prof. Chandrasekhar in his Centenary Lectures on Eddington at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1982. "It is my judgement" says Prof. Chandrasekhar, "that Eddington's greatest contribution to the General Theory of Relativity is his wondrous treatment of the subject in his Mathematical Theory of Relativity. I continue to use it". Again, with that magnanimity of mind which characterized Niels Bohr's attitude to Einstenian determinism, Chandrasekhar remarks: "I find it hard to understand why Eddington,who was one of the earliest and staunchest supporters of The General Theory of Relativity should have found the conclusion that Black Holes may form during the natural course of the evolution of stars, so unacceptable". And seen in historical perspective, the biographical essays written by Chandrasekhar — on Ralph Fowler, Eddington, Milne, Einstein and Karl Schwarszchild — constitute a prism for a long view of the development of twentieth century astrophysics.

As is well-known, Chandrasekhar studied in detail what happens to a star at the end of its life. Having burnt itself out, due to the relativistic degeneracy of the electron, he was able to show that stars which have a mass which is less than 1.4 times the mass of the sun, will experience a gravitational collapse. The expression "Black Hole" was given to this phenomenon —nearly three decades after Chandrasekhar worked out the details using Quantum Mechanics and the Special Theory of Relativity by John Archibald Wheeler.

Chandrasekhar started working in the area of General Relativity during the 'Seventies. His spectacular contribution in this area is the solution of the Dirac Equation in the ambience of the Kerr Metric. "The Black Holes of Nature", says Chandrasekhar, "are the most perfect macroscopic objects there are in the universe; the only elements in their construction are our concepts of space and time. And since the General Theory of Relativity provides only a single unique family of solutions for their descriptions, they are the simplest objects as well".

Highlighting his philosophical razor, William of Ockham, proclaimed during the early fourteenth century, that in slicing the world into categories, "thou shall not multiply entities unnecessarily". He might have been happy when Dirac explained the mathematical theory of the Spin 1/2 Electron in the first half of this century. Furthermore, this was continued by the 1976 Chandrasekhar solution of the Dirac Equation — formulated in 1928 and which represents the Spin 1/2 particles like the Electron and the Neutron — separable in the Kerr Geometry. The theory of the Gravitational Perturbations of the Kerr Black Hole is of considerable complexity and it has been

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tackled in a characteristically masterly style by Professor Chandrasekhar. And just as the Dirac Equation had set off a tidal wave in theoretical physics, so can Chandrasekhar's mathematical theory of Black Holes be regarded as one of the greatest achievements in the history of astronomy.

In his *Shakespeare, Newton and Beethoven or Patterns of Creativity,* Prof. Chandrasekhar says that "on reading Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry,* the question insistently occurs why there is no similar *A Defence of Science* written by a scientist of equal endowment". In trying to answer this question, one could think of at least four works — G.H. Hardy's *A Mathematician's Apology,* J. Bronowski's *The Common Sense of Science and The Visionary Eye,* Chandrasekhar's own *Truth and Beauty.*

Chandrasekhar's work Truth and Beauty, ranges from essays in biography to the dialogue of the scientific and literacy cultures, from a discussion of the patterns of beauty constituting Shakespeare's *Plays* and *Sonnets*, Newton's *Principia*, Beethoven's *Symphonies*, Milne's *Kinematical Theory of Relativity* and Einstein's *General Theory of Relativity* to the defence of scientific values. The volume concludes with sensitive assessments of Karl Schwarzchild and Arthur Stanley Eddington as well as an aesthetic response to the two major areas in the Mathematical Theory of Relativity. Prof. Chandrasekhar himself has made and continues to make memorable contributions to these two areas of Relativistic Astrophysics — the Mathematical Theory of Black Holes and the Mathematical Theory of Colliding Waves. Throughout Prof. Chandrasekhar has successfully attempted, in a manner which many readers will doubtless find intellectually stimulating, to bring out the relations between aesthetics and scientific motivations.

Together, these essays reveal Prof. Chandrasekhar in at less formal, more immediate mode — as one of the most distinguished scientist-aestheticians of our time. Indeed, these essays constitute a splendid body of work — an aesthetically meaningful complement to the scientific classics for which Prof. Chandrasekhar speaks in *Truth and Beauty* with the kind of quiet authority that makes his Shelley-inspired defence of scientific values a classic for our time.

At this point, a distinction ought to be made between the great scientist-writers like Eddington, Jeans, Haldane, Raman, Chandrasekhar, Weinberg, Weisskopf, and the science writers . Furthermore, like Madame Curie, Albert Einstein and C.V. Raman, Chandrasekhar is a brilliant expositor. For instance, Madame Curie's account of the discovery of radium, Einstein's formulation of the special theory of relativity in his paper on the "Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies". Raman's paper "On the Molecular Scattering of Light in Water and the Colour of the Sea" as well as his *Lectures on Physical Optics*, and Chandrasekhar's description of the White-dwarf state of stars are memorable pieces of scientific writing.

It is not only for his technical brilliance that Chandrasekhar is pre-eminent. He is even more celebrated for his literary sensibility which informs such elegant pieces and expositions as *The Story of Two Atoms, Marian Smoluchowski as the Founder of the Physics of Stochastic Phenomena, The Scientist, Astronomy is Science and in Human Culture, Einstein and General Relativity - Historical Perspectives, Beauty and the Quest for Beauty in Science and Einstein's General Theory of Relativity and Cosmology* (published in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

Chandrasekhar is a professional astronomer who in recent years had devoted some of his time to the explanation of some trends in the history of astronomy. In his 1968 Nehru Memorial Lecture he rightly states that "since no astronomy at an advanced level can exist without actual computations of planetary and

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lunar ephemerides, it must be the first task of the historian of Hindu astronomy to search for such texts". Here it is worth noting that David Pingree's projected eleven-volume ***Census of the Exact Sciences in Sanskrit*** might well fill in certain gaps in the history of Indian science. However, in order to get a clear picture, Chandrasekhar's Nehru Memorial Lecture — Astronomy in Science and in Human Culture — ought to be studied, along with his significant review of Neugebauer's *A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy*. For they not only reflect Chandrasekhar's characteristic aesthetic sensibility but also unveil the poetic vistas of the following Ptolemy verse:

> "I know that I am mortal and the creature of a day
>
> But when I contemplate the intricate circling spiral of the stars,
>
> No longer do my feet touch earth, but beside Zeus himself
>
> I take my fill of the immortal nectar of the gods".

Prof. Chandrasekhar's 1975 Nora and Edward Ryerson Lecture on ***Shakespeare, Newton and Beethoven or Patterns of Creativity*** is a significant contribution to the dialogue of the two cultures in our time. Here it is well to recall that Lord Snow, who concerned himself with the widening gap between science and the rest of our culture, in his Rede Lecture, sparked off an interesting controversy. Actually, Lord Snow had not made a plea for universal dilettentism but attempted to put an end to the cold war between the sciences and the humanities. And Snow's casual observation that literary men did not know such concepts as the second law of thermodynamics, which to him constituted the scientific equivalent of "Have you read a play by Shakespeare" was characterized as a "cheap journalistic infelicity" by F.R. Leavis in his polemical Richmond Lecture.

The man of letters and the scientist are equally concerned with what Aldous Huxley termed as the need to "give a purer sense to the words of the tribe" at different levels of perception. Here it would be relevant to refer to Professor Chandrasekhar's perceptive comment on the Heisenberg definition of beauty:

> "In a deeply moving essay on The Meaning of Beauty in the Exact Sciences, Heisenberg gives us a definition of beauty which I find most apposite. The definition, which Heisenberg says goes back to antiquity, is that "beauty is the proper conformity of the parts to one another and to the whole". On reflection it does appear that this definition touches the essence of what we may describe as 'beautiful', it applies to ***King Lear***, ***Misa Solemnis*** and the ***Principia***".

And viewed in historical perspective it is clear that the dialogue of the two cultures is not a new phenomenon. For Wordsworth wrote that "if the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration and will welcome the Being thus produced as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man". Furthermore, Shelley's stellar vision in Hellas :

> "Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
> From creation to decay
> Like the bubbles on a river
> Sparkling, bursting, borne away"

could be viewed as a poetic transcript of a monograph like Chandrasekhar's ***An Introduction to the Study of Stellar Structure***.

I conclude with a sentence from Chandrasekhar's essay on "Beauty and the Quest for Beauty in Science :

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"The translucence of the eternal splendour through material phenomena (for which Plotinus spoke) is made iridescent in such works as Jacobi's ***Lectures on Dynamics***, Boltmann's ***Lectures on Theory of Gases***, Sommerfeld's ***Atomic Structure and Spectral Lines***, Dirac's ***Principles of Quantum Mechanics*** and the various gems of exposition which Schroedinger wrote in his later years".

A sentence which could well be applied to some of Professor Chandrasekhar's own works such as ***Radiative Transfer*** and ***The Mathematical Theory of Black Holes***. ●

SELF AND MIND

K. SELVARAJ

Let them call me whatever name they would —
untouchable, clean, black, white, bad or good.
I'm — Sudra, Vaisya, Kshatriya, Brahmana — a whole.
And what matters to me is my mind's role.

Well, my mind is a wild and savage beast
With three gunas : Tamas, Rajas, Sattva ;
Only the first or the second of these
Predominates and determines his pace.

He gallops merrily
Down the vale of shadows that breeds agony,
He pulls wearily
Up the hill of substance that houses ecstasy.

We are at discord for he acts nonchalantly.
Whate'er flattering unction I lay gallantly,
Or howe'er I exhort him to the lofty course,
He wends his own way without any remorse.

Now I'm galled by his herd instinct and adamant nature.
It's time to destroy the low posture of this creature.
No matter how stiff is his resistance, I shall conquer,
And veer him from dark passions to Atmadarsanayogyata.

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PRAHLADA

(A PLALET)

HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

SCENE 1

(*In the Palace* - Hiranyakashapu, the King, and his Queen, Kayadhu.)

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Now can I bend all things to my desire,
Since with much prayer and penance I have won
Indomitable strength, immortal power.
If I but chose I could put out the fire
Of the dim stars, scoop out the golden sun,
And stamp the moon out like a withered flower.
Nor aught that lives, save in the twilight hour,
Dare break the magic circle of our peace.

KAYADHU

But wherefore, lord! should thy charmed circle cease
To work in that pale hour alone?

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Alas!
I cannot tell. But twilights come and go
Like swiftly-moving shadows in a glass,
Or harmless as the summer-winds that blow
Over the rice-fields, and, unheeded, pass,
I do not fear the twilight which is but
A wandering beggar with his eyelids shut,
Who knocks at every door and passes by.

(enter their son's Guru with a troubled look in his eyes)

GURU

My King! I fear your son has lost his head,
For he is always dreaming of the sky

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And ever talking of a pure white thread
That runs behind the birds and flowers, and runs
Beyond the painted clouds and flaming suns,
Connecting living beauties with the dead!
He says there is one spirit in all things,
In dogs and men and in the humming wings
Of insects in the forest.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Does he say
One spirit dwells in dogs and men? Alas!
He is gone mad.

GURU

My Lord, and sings all day
of one who will not die though all things pass.

KAYADHU

'Tis passing strange, my lord!

HIRANYAKASHAPU

'Tis passing strange!
Where is the boy?

GURU

I've brought him.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Bid him come
Into my presence

(enter Prahlada, smiling)

PRAHLADA

Father! through the dumb.
Blue sky I heard Him sing who knows no change.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Sure, he is mad.

PRAHLADA

I saw the Changless one
The unborn and eternal Spirit, who slips
From shape to shape, the laughter of whose lips
Paints gold and purple in the setting sun.
Whose silent fingers thrill the blind blue night

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With starry vision, and whose quiet face
Is brimming into dawn upon the height
Veiled in the fiery star-enamelled space.

KAYADHU

Sure, there is madness working in his brain.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Who is this wizard being that you sing?

PRAHLADA

He is the only and immortal King!

HIRANYAKASHAPU

My boy, you dare not shape those words again
Unless they point to me.

PRAHLADA

No other words

Wake on my lips, my lord! for I have dwelt
Long days and nights dreaming of Him, and felt
One with the great skies and the little birds.

GURU

He is never tired of telling us about
His foolish King that nobody as yet
Has seen.

PRAHLADA

O Father! do you hear the shout
Of sunshine on the water? I have met
The Maker of the sunshine and the sea .....

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Give over, boy, this show of lunacy,
I shall not brook it longer.

KAYADHU

Gentle son,
You are not well.

PRAHLADA

See! how His hands have spun
Eternal webs of wonder oe'r the world .....
All heaven like a banner is unfurled

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Quiet in triumph through the lonely ages .....
O kneel before the Lord, the Changeless One
The Dream of Saints, the Vision of the Sages!

HIRANYAKASHAPU

What do you call your Lord? Has it a name?

PRAHLADA

Indeed! 'tis written on the world's broad leaf
Distinct and wonderful in flawless flame .....
Lo! He is Hari.

GURU

Some invisible thief
Has robbed him of his senses.

HIRANYAKASHAPU *(in anger)*

Do you dare
To name Him in my presence?

PRAHLADA

Lord! I know
None else but Him whose love is everywhere .....

HIRANYAKASHAPU

I hate Him, boy, since He is my great foe,
Yea! and with hate will slay Him in the end .....

PRAHLADA

He lives alike in hearts of foe and friend.

KAYADHU

His mind is in a mist.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Nay! do not drive
My heart into a frenzy with your voice .....

PRAHLADA

It is through Him all life is still alive;
It is in Him that worlds and men rejoice.

HIRANYAKASHAPU *(to his wife)*

This boy shall die. Go! fetch the poisoned cup .....

(she goes in without a word)

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So you shall perish in your madness, boy

(she brings the cup and hesitates to give it to Prahlada)

PRAHLADA *(taking the cup from her hands)*

God floods the poison like a sea of joy .....
And with chaste lips He sucks the poison up.

(he drinks it)

SCENE 2

(The same. Hiranyakashapu, Kayadhu and the Guru. At the door stands a group of attendants awaiting the King's orders.)

HIRANYAKASHAPU

What poison could be worse than Hari's name?
And he is drunk with it.

GURU

A wizard-flame,
Burns in his eyes, my lord.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

It shall be blown
Out like a friendless solitary spark,
And like a star deserting its high throne
In heaven, drop and die into the dark.

KAYADHU

A feeling tells me that he is possessed.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

There is an evil spirit in his breast
Has set him wandering so.

GURU

He never tires
Of chasing shadows. There he comes, my King.

(enter Prahlada, singing)

PRAHLADA

The Summer and the Autumn and the Spring
Are of one Fire the separate-coloured fires.

GURU

The same old song again, the same dull tune .....

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KAYADHU

My lord! he walks as in a quiet trance.

PRAHLADA

He made the yellow sun, the mellow moon,
And taught the infant-stars to dream and dance!

GURU

The same old sorrowful hunger in his eyes!

KAYADHU

There 's still the same old madness in his speech.

PRAHLADA

Each clod of earth has wings that it may reach
In final flight Lord Hari's flowering skies.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

That name again! I swear it shall be hushed
Forever on his lips. This evil fruit
My Queen, that you have borne me, shall be crushed
Under a wild impetuous elephant foot,
Until his blood, like juices, stain the earth.

GURU

Prahlada! are you not afraid of death?

PRAHLADA

My Hari dwells in death and dwells in birth;
And fills the whole world with immortal breath.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Die like a feeble blossom in the power
Of the dark monster, boy!

PRAHLADA

Naught ever dies .....
Eternally my Hari waits and cries
In the great monster and the feeble flower.
(the attendants drag him out of the hall)

HIRANYAKASHAPU

When I am in a rage, like dolls of clay,
The little gods of men fall down and pray

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For mercy at my feet. A trembling cloud
Wraps up the heaven like a dead man's shroud,
And the sun's glory hides behind the veil
Of a dim shadow, and the world grows pale.

GURU

Sage Narada, O King! deserves the blame
For the boy's madness. It is said that he
It was who taught the boy, Lord Hari's name
While yet within the womb.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

That cannot be .....
It is an earth-born madness which the mind
Contracts in empty search after a blind
And unsubstantial god. By Heaven! I rule
The three wide worlds of mist and wave and fire ...
The seven oceans and their kingdoms cool
Of pearl and rainbow built. No God is greater
Than I am, since I bend to my desire
The vast creation and their proud Creator!

(Enter attendants in great haste and excitement)

1ST ATTENDANT

My lord! the dreadful monster will not tread
Upon the prince's body.

2ND ATTENDANT

Hari's name
Has killed the brute in him and made him tame.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

What ! is the boy alive?

1ST ATTENDANT

He is not dead .....

2ND ATTENDANT

He sings as merry as a child in Spring
While with enraptured trunk that giant thing
Like a young human mother, strokes his head.

KAYADHU

Sure, this is wizard's work.

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GURU

'Tis like a story
Heard in the depths of sleep.

(Enter Prahlada, smiling)

PRAHLADA

My lord! of that divine tremendous creature
Is dancing Hari's glad immortal glory!

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Silence! your words but fan the hungry flame
Of my heart's anger.

PRAHLADA

Cool it in the fountain,
In the eternal fountain of His name.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Go! take this boy and hurl him down the mountain!
By heaven, he shall not live another hour.

PRAHLADA

Why are you angry, Father, with your son?
Is it because I sing the Changeless One
The endless source of Beauty and Power,
The mute Infinity in man and flower,
The Fountainhead of knowledge, and the sea
Without a shore.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Wild words! Away with him .....

(The attendants take him away)

PRAHLADA *(while going out)*

Lord Hari's hands are beckoning from a far
Standing alone upon the mountain rim

(Exit Prahlada)

KAYADHU

Alas! he is mad.

GURU

My lord! his visions are
So like a drunken thing's; dishevelled streams

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Of broken images and formless dreams
Run restless through his mind.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

He has no mind.
He lost it long ago, among a blind
Grey heap of shattered godhead. He will die
Poor raving fool! crushed to a little pulp .....
Nor will the gods in heaven heed his cry
When death, dissolves his body at a gulp.

(An attendant comes rushing in)

ATTENDANT

My lord! three men have slipped and fallen together
Over the mountain-steeps; a peal of laughter
Broke somewhere to behold them rolling after
The Prince into the valley.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Are they dead?

ATTENDANT

Only the Prince is saved. Light as a feather
Descending slow upon a blossomed bed,
His body dropped through air. My lord! its poise
Was like to a great bird's that one beholds
But in the depths of dreaming.

KAYADHU

In this boy's
Young heart a demon dwells.

GURU

A spirit folds
His body like a serpent

(Enter Prahlada, smiling)

PRAHLADA

Father! I
Have brought a message to you from the King
Whose swift and painted flight is in the sky
And of whose flight all life is but a wing.

(The King is raging with anger, The Queen and the Guru look on silent and wondering)

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SCENE 3

(The same. Hiranyakashapu, Guru and the Queen. The attendants await the King's next order.)

HIRANYAKASHAPU

And when they hear your helpless drowning cries
Nine lakhs of ocean-creatures stark and dim
Will crowd and tear your body limb by limb,
Staining their mouths with your heart's dropping blood,
Fishes in greed will feast upon your eyes.
The giant crocodiles beneath the flood
Will dance with joy enchanted by the fresh
White crackle of your bones, and serpents swim
Swifter than lightning-fire, to bite your flesh.

PRAHLADA

Can you not see the glimmer of His smile
Upon the ocean-flood and in the hearts
Of ocean-creatures sailing through its gloom?
The Lord is seated in the crocodile.
And in each little fish that dives and darts,
And in each snake born in the ocean's womb.

GURU

Alas! poor boy!

KAYADHU

He raves and raves and raves
Like a black tempest-cloud upon the sea .....

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Go! fling his body to the wandering waves!

PRAHLADA

The holy Boatman's voice is calling me.
(They drag him away).

(The stage is darkened for a few moments and through the darkness floats the sound of the ocean and the voice of Prahlada singing the praises of Hari, his Lord.)

HIRANYAKASHAPU

(when the stage grows bright again)
(laughing almost hysterically)

Sing on, poor fool! before the waves devour
Your hollow hymns of praise to Him I hate.

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KAYADHU

I bore him in an unauspicious hour.

GURU

The hunger of the sea was in his fate!

(Enter attendants in great haste)

1ST ATTENDANT

Lord! we have never known such things before.
There's witchcraft round the body of the boy.

2ND ATTENDANT

My King! the waters clapped their hands for joy
To hear the young Prince singing his wild song.

3RD ATTENDANT

Each time we hurled him into the mad sea
Some kind hand bore him gently to the shore!
Lord! we have never seen such sights before!

1ST ATTENDANT

The world seems wrong because there's something wrong
With the young Prince.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

The devils mock at me
Now that the twilight-hour draws near. But come!
We shall yet strike the bitter music dumb
Upon his lips.

KAYADHU

My Lord! I read a sorrow
In your dark eyes.

GURU

A mournful tinge of gold
Is in the air.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

He shall not see the morrow!
To-night the fire shall be his winding-sheet.

PRAHLADA

(Coming with a smile)

Lord Hari hums His melody of old
Upon the waters. Lo! the Lord is coming!
All Life, like a great thirsty bee, is humming
Around the flowering echo of His feet.

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HIRANYAKASHAPU

I'll break Him like a branch across my knee
When your Lord comes!

KAYADHU

What! will he never tire
of talking so?

GURU

My Lord! how mournfully
The twilight comes.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Go! fling him into fire.

(The attendants take him away rudely)

KAYADHU

Whose voice is that, my lord?

GURU

The night will soon
Be here.

KAYADJU

My lord! who plays upon the flute
In this dim twilight?

GURU

'Tis mournful tune

KAYADHU

The night will soon descend and fold it up.

GURU

At night the sky looks like a poisoned cup.

KAYADHU

Or like a giant monster's shadowy foot.

GURU

Or like a deep dark mountain void of motion.

KAYADHU

Or like a black illimitable ocean.

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HIRANYAKASHAPU

My Queen! the twilight-hour will soon expire
And we shall rest and last from Hari's name.

(The attendants rush in as before)

1ST ATTENDANT

My lord! his body has burned up the fire!

2ND ATTENDANT

The Prince's song has eaten up the flame.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

You speak like madmen!

GURU

It is very strange!

KAYADHU

His body is immune to everything
Being possessed,

(The prince enters the hall with a smile of love and kindness)

PRAHLADA

The glory of the King
Continues changeless in a world of change.
I feel Him shining on the golden height,
I feel Him breathing in the twilight grey,
The silence of whose voice is in the night,
The splendour of whose face is in the day.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Come hither, boy! and let me see your face .....

KAYADHU

The twilight's glow is on his eyes and hair.

GURU

How pale the sky's mouth glimmers.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Where is he,
This idiot-god you dream of night and day?
Come! tell me whither stands his dwelling-place?

PRAHLADA

The laughter of His lips glows everywhere,
His beauty burns alike in fire and clay.

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HIRANYAKASHAPU *(mockingly)*

And in the pillar too?

PRAHLADA

What place is there
Where He is not?

HIRANYAKASHAPU *(wielding his sword)*

You lie!

PRAHLADA

Yon column rings
With the white music of the King of Kings.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

You lie!

PRAHLADA

I hear His voice.

HIRANYAKASHAPU

Then strike, my sword!
And spill a wizard's blood.

(The column cracks in two, and the Image of Narasimha appears)

PRAHLADA

Behold ! the Lord !

(The Queen, the attendants and the Guru fall down struck dumb with fear. Narasimha springs out from the column, lifts the King up, places him across his knees and with his mighty hands rips his bowels up and starts busily examining his entrails, as though looking for something precious)

NARASIMHA

(Seating the boy Prahlada on his lap)

Lo! I have come at last, my little Lover !
To crown with silence doubt's impetuous storm.

PRAHLADA

What are you seeking in my father's form?

NARASIMHA

My holy son! I'm trying to discover
Within its gloom another little Lover !

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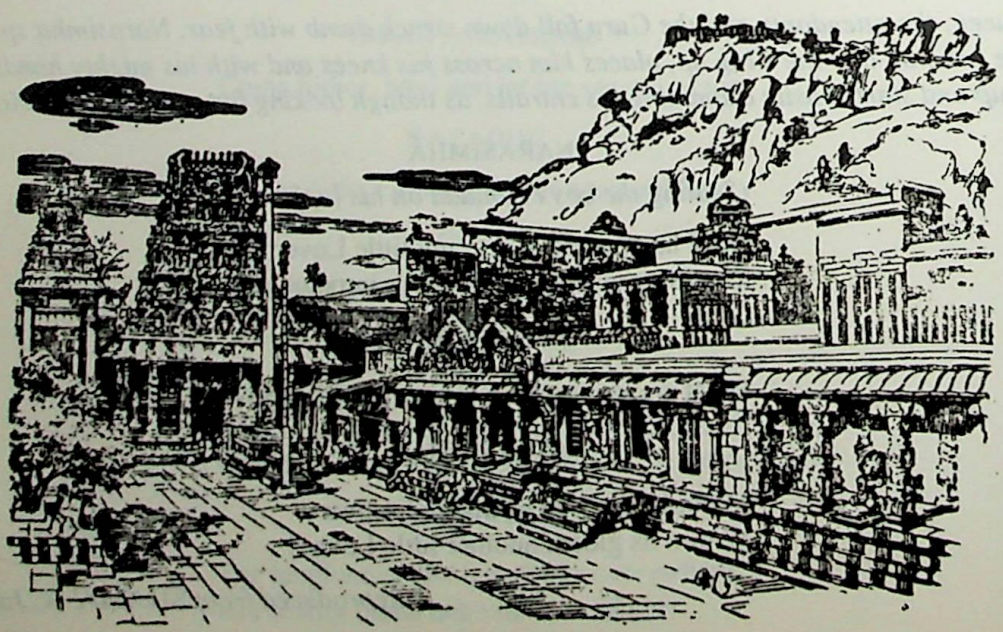
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THE TREASURE ISLAND

V. BALASUBRAMANIAN

God not seen, famed or named
Good hope He paves for as we pray
Universe He governs as He guards
Evil deeds He wipes off as chieftain
No caste or creed for the unseen force!
He pervades the globe as he watches
To ward off our worries He stays
We search heaven to earth for a peace
Earthly pursuits not offer us solace
Hell of a hunt we make in vain
Alas! that priceless peace not gained !
Sure! Almighty withholds that peace!
Thousands of possessions we have!
Inexplicable! how that free mind desired !
Our very birth sets on a restless state
Unto our end we never get a solace
Peace indeed on unattained Treasure Island !



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TOWARDS A DIVINE LIFE*

Dr. PREMA NANADAKUMAR

INDIA'S ANCIENT WAY (Sanatana Dharma) has been highly adaptable. While it has never compromised on the basic values that make man lead a good life and engage him in a life of spiritual progress, it has avoided codifying the methodology of religion into rigid and narrow patterns based on a single, revelatory book. From the Vedic dawn onwards, Indians have always shown a profound reverence for life. There is no place here for violence in thought, word or deed. Rather, the exphasis is on calm, sterling patience, profound forgiveness and supreme joy. Ananda is the significance of the Vedic word "Rita" which is considered a necessary adjunct to man's life on earth. As A.C. Bose says :

"Rita as Moral Law is a domianat idea in the Vedas. Ideal sages are described as people who praise Rita and think straight. Men are asked to "think of wealth and strive to win it by Rita and by worship". Man and wife are asked in the *Atharva Veda* to "enjoy good fortune by observing Rita and bearing themselves according to Rita". The Veda says that those who live in terms of Rita as moral form also participate in Rita as aesthetic form — good life is made happy hy Nature's bearty and benignity. "Sweet blows the breeze for one who lives by Rit; rivers pour for him sweets".[1]

For, from the dawn of civilisation, man has wondered at the miracle of life, the miracle of creation. He has sought to trace the origins of this wonderful creation and tried to gather the very best in nature into his consciousness so as to grow into a supramental stature : strong as the wind, brilliant like the fire, generous as the clouds, life sustaining as water. One of the famous Rig Vedic hymns records the speechlessness to the worshipper when confronted by Nature in her pristine beauty. So marvellous this creation, to whom shall we take our offerings of gratitude, *Kasmai devayah havisha vidhema ?*

> "It is he who in his might surveyed the waters,
>
> conferring skill and creating worship —
>
> he, the God of gods, the One and the only One,
>
> Who is the Deity we shall worship with our offerings ?
>
> Father of the world — he not destroy us —
>
> who with Truth as his Law made the heavens and produced waters, vast and beautiful.

★ **A Divine Life in a Divine Body : By Navajata. Nava Path, SABDA, Pondicherry – 605 002. Price : Rs. 60.**

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Who is the Deity we shall worship with our offerings ?"[2]

The thrill of joy that runs through man's physical frame as he contemplates upon the gifts of creation has itself become the foundation of Indian Yoga that seeks to transform man's present flawed state into one of eternal delight. The aim of Yoga is to achieve the delight of existence as a permanent state of being. Towards that end, we have to say a firm 'no' to all narrow thoughts and untrue limitations that compartmentalise the human family. Analysing the first four hymns of the Rig Veda addressed to Agni, Sri Aurobindo states that Agni is "the active or effective power of Truth-consciousness" that alone can wipe out the felisities that at present imprison mankind in egoisic shells of separative consciousness. Agni (Truth) burns away all that is contrary to *satya*. imdeed, Agni contains *satyam* and *rtam.*

"Morever, he is *citrasravastamah*; from the *rtam* there proceeds a fullness of richly luminous and varied inspirations which give the capacity for doing the perfect work. For all these are epithets of Agni as the *hotr*, the priest of the sacrifice, he who performs the offering. Therefore it is the power of Agni to apply the Truth in the work (*Karma* or` *apas)* symbolised by the sacrifice, that makes him the object of human invocation".[3]

As the fire glows outside on the sacrificial spot, there is a corresponding illumination within. The petty and humdrum feelings that bind us in our mundane life are loosened and even burnt up in this "inward force of unified Light and Power". Such is the transformational power of the Vedic poems that man's divine nature gets revealed with the shedding of the baser qualities. Once man wakes up in his divine nature, the rest is pure felicity, *mayas :* "and the gods who represent the Truth-consciousness are described as *mayobhuvah.* those who bring or carry in their being the felicity".

"Thus in these four verses of the opening hymn of the Veda we get the first indications of the principal ideas of the Vedic Rishis, ... the conception of a Truth-consciousness supramental and divine, the invocation of the gods as powers of the Truth to raise man out of the falsehoods of the mortal mind, the attainment in and by this truth of an immortal state of perfect good and felicity and the inner sacrifice and offering of what one has and is by the mortal to the immortal as the means of the divine consummation".[4]

Down the centuries, Indian Yoga has built its many splendorous mansions on the firm foundations of this *mayas* or felicity Ananda. Sri Aurobindo belongs to this great tradition. His Yoga goes back to the original fresh-water springs of the *Veda,* crystallises his own Sadhana in terms of this Anada *(Rtam, Bhadram),* and provides a plentiful framework of reference in his poetry and prose for us to achieve personal transformation *here and now* : to lead one's life on earth as a life divine.

It is our good fortune that Sri Aurobindo's Yoga has been no hot-house plant. It is a way being pursued by countless Sadhaks. For those who wish to take it up and are in search of proper introductions, there is no dearth of authoritative books on the subject. The most luminously simple volume in this library to appear in recent times is Navajata's *A Divine Life in a Divine Body.*

An eminent Aurobindonian who was an unflappable centre of calm and reassurance even when right in the midst of soul-searing action, Navajata began life as a successful businessman. But the call of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga was irresistible and he joined the Ashram. Under the direct supervision of the Mother, he progressed far and fast in Yoga as well as in his service to the divine. The Sri Aurobindo Society became a global movement under his dynamic management and he travelled ceaselessly. Inspiring people to follow Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and achieve success and prog-

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ress. Neither Navajata's life nor that of the millions inspired by him can be termed as rags-to-riches stories. But everyone has felt the entry of a new force in their lives through this Yoga that exudes cheer, promise and fulfilment.

It is a pity that most of the speeches of Sri Navajata were not recorded. But the few we have are roses. ***A Divine Life in a Divine Body*** has 21 talks that touch upon different aspects of our everyday life. The instinctive joy of Navajata's approach to life's problems is not obliterated by the cold print. The crystalline sincerity of his words never fails to touch a deep chord in the reader's mind; and the reader's soul is repeatedly illumed because of Sri Aurobindo's words presented at choice intervals by Navajata.

A child ike, heavenly faith marks Navajata's approach to the Mother. And how she had brought out the best in him! When he pleaded with her to reveal his defects so he could improve himself, she said : "No, no, my child, I shall show you your qualities so that you may improve yourself". After assuring us that a divine life in a divine body is possible, Navajata would have us aspire for it through Sadhana. The four basic requisites for Sadhana are the Guru. the Shastra, the Kala and Utsaha. While the Yoga is no boubt based on individual perfection, its aim is an integral, collective transformation of man into a perfect, unified world community :

"He (Sri Aurobindo) says that you may receive the Divine command but you may not be able to execute it. For this you must become a perfect instrument for carrying out the command, individually and collectively. That is why Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have said that an individual evolution is not enough; the Supermind consciousness must descend upon earth. Individual evolution may be a preliminary step, but the Supermind consciousness must descend on earth and become a guiding priciple, like the mind is at present. And when this happens, the world would change."

Also, one man's perfection can institute a Big Change. Nor need we feel sceptical as incarnatons and Mahayogis have achieved such transformations of the people near them. When we recognise the truth of Sri Aurobindo's Mahavakya, "All life is Yoga", our perceptions get attuned to the new consciousness. Meditation, Karmayoga, Hathayoga, Bhaktiyoga — all, all become so many pathways to high achievement and entry into the divine consciousness.

Navajata assures us that loyalty to the Divine by holding on to the divine consciousness makes us invincible and puts us on the pathway of an endless progression. For, remember, the Aurobindonian Yoga does not accept the ascetic's denial of life nor the epicure's perversion of life. It is an Ananda Yoga that opens up with the spontaneous joy of a lotus opening its petals to the sun and finding high fulfilment.

When all life is Yoga instinct with felicity, there is no aspect that can be ignored. One could begin anywhere and then launch on the adventure of consciousness from the human to the divine. Navajata offers certain helpful insights into the various aspects of meditation. Japa is also an important instrument to achieve spiritual progress. The concept of Guru is explained with great skill :

"It is the Divine who uses the Guru, a real Guru, for the Mantra to be given to the disciple, for the Sadhana to be done and for the guidance to be given to him from time to time. This means that a Guru should be a person who has a constant link with the Divine Consciousness. He should also have the capacity to take the disciple into his own consciousness and guide him by communicting in silence his consciousness to him. This is a real guru".[5]

The Guru is able to transform the Sishya even by a mere glance as with Sri Aurobindo himself and Sri Ramana Maharshi. On the part of the disciple, respetful obedience and faultless humility can work wonders :

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"You should try to be linked with the Guru's consciousness and constantly maintain this link integrally, psychically, mentally, vitally, physically. As I explained, a physical contact with the Guru — through letters, through words, through a Mantra or by working for him -- helps. Whatever you want, try to see the Divine presence in that aspect in your Guru and try to open to it. You may want to learn music, you may want to do painting, you may want literary capacity or faith or courage. You can get anything, because everything is latent in the Divine. By our concentration the capacities are awakened; by our aspiration we call them down; by our receptivity we receive them; by our surrender we assimilate them. That is how the process works".[6]

Not a word is out of place even in Navajata's reminiscences of the inexplicable happenings in his life that was always spent in the aegis of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. He takes the seeming miracles in his stride with the firm conviction that the Mother's Grace is all-powerful and all - pervading:

"Many people say Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is difficult. I say it is easy. Easy, because ninety-nine per cent of the work is done by Sri Aurobindo Himself. Otherwise it would be not only difficult but impossible. But that one per cent of sincerity that is required on our part, is most estnail — sincerity in becoming conscious of the Divine in all the parts of the being and integrating them".[7]

Speaking of sleep and dreams, Navajata points out how Sri Aurobindo's Yoga takes us beyond the mind and into the worlds of delight. This is apparent even in a seemingly mundane and Tamasic activity like sleep. "Beyond the mind are the worlds of delight. Really speaking, when you go beyond the mind your sleep becomes refreshing."

Despair and suicide have no place in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. A life full of possibilities should never be destroyed. In fact we should not condone wastage of any kind. Navajata's voice insinuates into the consciousness of the housewife, the student, the labourer, the scholar :Your house should be in order ... Know your best potential ... Consider food as Prasad. When Navajata says "You should be a living model of what a child of the Mother should be", all at once is said.

In all his talks, Navajata never forgets the foundations of our culture. The ***Ramayana,*** the ***Mahabharata*** and the ***Gita*** are effective instruments in mastering the path of Yoga. Of course, Hinduism has innumerable religious, spiritual and sectarian treatises. We must learn to jettison sectarianism, superstition and blind ritualism but hold on to those spiritual movemets suggested in our scriptures. By doing so India could produce a spiritualised society, a perfect society that can be a role-model for humanity.

The society envisioned by Aurobindonian Yoga is nothing less than "spiritual communism". Here the State — the Big Brother — is eliminated and the Divine alone remains. It is the Divine that is the seer *(upadrushta),* the ordainer *(anumantha),* the devotee *(bhakta),* the injoyer *(bhokta),* and the Lord of All *(mahaeshwarah).* It is as Sri Aurobindo has written "A spiritualised society would live like its spiritual individuals, not in the ego, but in the spirit, not as a collective ego but as a collective soul."

In this possibility of soul-togetherness lies the definite future of human unity. Man will yet realise the joy of togetherness and in fact, Sri Aurobindo's Action has already begun. The doubting Thomases are effectively silenced by Navajata :

"The change is a very big one. We should not look at our incapacities but at the Divine's Grace to bring it about. We are not going to do this, it is the Divine who is going to do it. And always the means are available for the work to be done, if at each moment we are conscious. If we are conscious of the Divine, there is no problem in the world which cannot be solved".[8]

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For us who saw Navajata in action, "A Divine Life in a Divine Body" is not a mere possibility but an assured certainty. He was the very embodiment of the Ananda Yogin, practical and idealistic, simple and scholarly, meditative and exuberant. The very image of *utsaha*, Navajata was truly " a messenger of the Mother's Love and Grace", a channel to bring to us the divine afflatus, a paraclete to lead us to Truth-consciousness :

" I gather knowledge here,
Then to my human frame awhile descend
And walk mid men, choosing my instruments,
Testing, rejecting and confirming souls —
Vessels of the Spirit ; for the golden age
In Kali comes, the iron lined with gold.
The Yoga shall be given back to men,
The sects shall cease, the grim debates die out
And atheism perish from the Earth,
Blasted with knowledge ; love and brotherhood
And wisdom repossess Sri Krishna's world.

FOOTNOTES

1. On the vedas (1966), P. 7.
2. Ibid., P. 63
3. Sri Aurobindo, On the Veda (1956), P. 76
4. ibid., P. 79.
5. A Divine Life in a Divine Body. P. 85
6. ibid., P. 90.
7. ibid., P. 112.
8. ibid., P. 254.
9. Sri Aurobindo, "The Mhatma".

TWO POEMS

PRASANTA KUMAR PANDA

EGO

I have never spared a person,
To forget me completely is impossible.
I am an unattained greatness
Of this repressive environment
Where aspirations must
entangle each other
Under dim light and fade
in the shadow of mind

LIFE

A hope is living
In a corpse
The corpse often greans
Like a pregnant woman
In a most productive manner
Labouring to make a difficult birth possible
When the child is dead in the womb.

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BOOK REVIEWS

A Comparative History of Ideas: By Hajme Nakamura. Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi – 7. Price : Rs. 250.

As one would expect from an international scholar like Nakamura, this work is an extraordinary combination of history, philosophy and sociology, with a remarkable range of vision. He traces developments in the intellectual and social evolution of societies in different cultures, e.g., Indian, Chinese, Japanese, European. He discusses the growth of concepts of God, Universals, Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy in the various cultures. He is obviously well grounded in Buddhist thought and religion and does his best to be faithful to the spirit of other religions. He covers the following subjects in a methodical manner : thought in early agricultural communities; rise of philosophy and the development of heterodoxies; early universal religions and the ideology of the universal state; medieval thought; modern thought.

Throughout he takes the Indian model for his standard in assessing the value and direction of civilisations on the two continents. He thinks Thought in the West had little influence on the development of Mind in the East till after the impact of the European Powers on Asiq. It is difficult to agree with him when he says that evolution is mainly a Western concept. Actually it is implied in the philosophy of the Tantras which traces the journey of the soul on the rising stair of existence. He also seems to feel that the ethical obsession preponderates in the Eastern religious ideologies. It is interesting to follow him in his analysis of parallels in the scriptures of Buddhism and Christianity. Rightly does the author underline the growing turn towards mutual acceptance in the cultural and religious traditions of the world today.

The study is well documented and the footnotes throw interesting lights on significant events in the history of the peoples. There are copious cross-references to developments in ancient Greece. "Alexander was once asked, 'Why do you show greater respect and reverence to your instructor than you do to your father?' He answered, 'From my teacher I obtain life eternal; and from my father a perishable existence. Moreover, my father brought me down from heaven to earth but Aristotle has raised me from earth to heaven." (P.111)

The overwhelming impression one has while reading this volume is of the extensive knowledge of the author with some areas where more depth is called for. He misses the vitality of the Indian Soul.

M.P. PANDIT

(This review was written by Mr. M.P. Pandit before his passing away).

The Concept of Man - A Study in Comparative Philosophy : Edited by S. RadhaKrishnan and P.T. Raju. Indian edition 1992 published by Motilal Banarsidas Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi – 7. Pp. 546. Price : Rs. 250

This is one more study on man. Ever since Man began to think, his first subject of study was himself. In fact, his life, his needs,

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his mates, his fellow-beings, their interaction with and inter-dependence on nature and life around him prompted him to muse about himself. From these musings, emerged originally naturalist religions and simplistic explanations regarding the universe and human beings. These were origins of philosophy and beginnings of religion. Wider and deeper philosophies flowered, as human knowledge increased. Be it a theistic or atheistic philosophy, Man constituted its central point and theme. Even for the Bhakti cult, the main aim is to make man surrender himself to a supernatural power. Indeed Man is the axis around which all religions and philosophical thoughts revolved.

In consequence, innumerable concepts of Man came to be propounded. And their number is ever growing. Screening all these concepts, one aspect emerges fairly clearly. Man is gradually asserting himself and is endeavouring to become free in mind and thought, untramelled by other influences.

So studies in comparative philosophy have become not only useful, but also necessary. Otherwise, one runs the risk of losing himself in confusion. This book is one such study.

S. Radhakrishnan and P.T. Raju have done a highly purposeful job in editing this comparative study. It has become so popular with seekers of philosophical knowledge that it soon became necessary to bring out a second edition even in 1966. This one, under review, is the Indian edition published in 1992.

In Chapters I to VIII, highly qualified scholars, both Eastern as well as Western, unfolded with lucidity and objectivity the concept of Man in diverse thoughts. Namely, in Greek thought by John Wild of Harvard and Yale Universities, in Jewish thought by A.J. Herschel of Jewish Theological Seminary, New York; in Chinese thought by W.T.Chan of Darmouth College, Hanover; in Indian thought by P.T. Raju, the co-editor of this publication, Professor of Philosophy and Indian Studies at the College of Wooster, Ohio, U.S.A; in Christian thought by Ernst Ben, University of Marburg, Germany; in Islamic thought by Ibrahim Madkour, Academy of Arabic Thought, Cairo; in Marxist thought by M.B. Mitten, Academy of Sciences, Moscow.

In Chapter V, P.T. Raju gives an anlytical examination and comparisons of the above concepts and his own reflections. In the chapter he deals with a high level of clarity, with such basic aspects like aims of philosophy, the ideal man, Man and Nature, Man and the Society, Man and the Divine Spirit, etc. At the end, he adds a highly thought-provoking section under the caption "Epilogue". S. Radhakrishnan makes some "preparatory remarks" which are enlightening. At the very commencement of the book P.T. Raju provides a "prologue" to the second edition. Therein he introduces the theme and purpose of the publication. He also contributes an introduction.

The collection of different concepts of Man and of their comparative study is very informative. It provides to the reader a panoramic view of diverse philosophical thoughts. It also enables him to appreciate how diverse philosophies, studied together, unveil "the unending creativity of Man".

Every scholar included in this compendium unfolds his theme with clarity and at the same time also with a high degree of objectivity. The second edition is made more comprehensive by adding to what was contained in the first edition, some chapters on concept of Man in Christian, Islamic and Marxist philosophies.

However, one wishes that, in the Indian edition at least, published in 1992, the concept of Man in Humanism and New Humanism is included, as an independent chapter. Then the comparative study would have been uptodate.

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It is note-worthy that "the interest of the editors, nor the contributors was religious in the sense of propagating one and criticising others" (page 14). This claim of the editors is fully justified by the contents.

No individual philosophical concept is final and eternal, though fundamentalists claim that stature to their respective philosophies. History of human culture and civilization shows that concepts of Man are constantly evolving due to the unquenchable thirst for more and more knowledge on the part of Man. Comparative study of what has been done and achieved so far is an absolute necessity for further growth and development of thought. This volume provides such a study. So much so, it helps in further progress of free philosophical thoughts. Such is the proclaimed purpose of the book. The editors succeeded in their chosen task in a full measure. This study is at once a valuable reference book and a thought-provoking treatise.

AVULA SAMBASIVA RAO

Indian Aesthetics : An Introduction : V.S. Seturaman, Macmillan & Co., Ltd. Price : 150.

Literary oriticism is so important a part of the study and teaching of literature and in Indian universities particularly in the teaching of English literature that in many syllabi of English studies, there is a separate paper devoted to it. The tendency hitherto has been to prescribe that some knowledge of the "classical" background of English Literary Criticism shall be a part of such study. In India, at least in some universities, there has been some faint recognition of the need to enlarge the scope of the study of literary criticism and to attune it to the Indian sensibility by bringing within its range some knowledge of Indian speculations, criteria and values found in the great classics of Indian Alankarasastra. That Indian creative writers thought a great deal about this and that there is implicit in their great achievement, a finely conceived pattern of aesthetic values — this is no longer disputed. But the excuse was made frequently that there was no coherent inter-related introductory treatment of the subject available in English. This need was sought to be met by an anthology of critical essays on Indian Alankarasastra, brought out by Dr. Raghavan and Nagendra more than two decades ago. However, this was inevitably regarded as inadequate as the book did not include extracts or selections from the classics of Indian Alankarasastra illustrating their values, concepts and approach.

Dr V.S. Seturaman has gallantly attempted to provide us with carefully chosen extracts from the major *alankarikas*, while supplementing the original critical essays of Raghavan's book with essays by Sri Aurobindo, Dr Ananda Coomaraswami and Rabindranath Tagore. An additional attraction of this new book is that Dr Seturaman has included an essay by himself on the practical aspects of the study of Indian Alankarasastra in the teaching of English literature.

It is indisputable that cultural variations deriving from some local, regional and linguistic factors do and can prevent somewhat but not irreparably the human aesthetic sensibility from looking for larger perspectives, common values and concepts of aesthetic stimuli and response. Beauty and power, aiming at the largest measure of ultimate Truth through the artistic percepts and creative achievement of gifted artists, have always been the goals of the aesthetic quest. Alankara in speech and writing has always a valued means, in its infinite variety, a means of achieving aesthetic delight. Irony, humour, pathos are common to all those who can at all respond to their presence in life and art. Peter Bells excepted most human beings respond to the intensely beautiful, the intensely tragic and exhilaratingly comic in life and art. The concept of Sahridaya is thought to be a Sanskrit concept but it is implicit in almost every culture in that sensitivity to emotional stimuli is recognized as the gift of a few, while

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the creative use of such a gift is recognized as possible only to a very few. There is therefore an essential and indispensable universality in aesthetic perceptions. It is the recognition of this universality that prompted Dr Seturaman to plan this book, so that Indian students of foreign literatures, and particularly of English literature, could bring to bear on their studies their native and implicit Indian sensitivities and values. This quest will, we feel confident, deepen and intensify Indian response to great art, to *Hamlet* and *Lear,* to *Othello* and *Macbeth*. Hamlet's reactions to his problems, whatever T.S. Eliot may say, are aesthetically natural and therefore intensely moving and satisfying. Lear's problem is a human problem — of fathers who are disconcerted by distressingly different responses to their affection from their own children. Macbeth's commitment to evil in pursuit of vaulting ambition recalls Ravana's pathetic, but not wholly dignified, enslavement to improper lust. Human nature is largely the same, everywhere. This is and ought to be the basis of any organisation of the study of the art of literature. Dr. Seturaman has by bringing into focus a large number of passages, skilfully and carefully selected from the Sanskrit Alankarikas, served Indian students of English literature, and may we say, even of Sanskrit literature very well indeed. The translations of the passages selected are altogether admirable. One wishes, however, that Dr. Seturaman had given us an account of the contents of the passages selected, and some passages of practical criticism of the Indian Alankaras. A bibliography of books suited for further study and a vastly enlarged glossary would add greatly to the value of Dr. Seturaman's book.

Prof. S. RAMASWAMI

Ethics of Sex and Marriage : By Dr. C. Jacob, Retired District Judge, Barrevari Street, Narsapuram, West Godavari Dist. Price : Rs. 25.

Dr. Jacob, now a retired judicial officer, utilised his varied experiences in the course of his professional career in studying the intricacies of human nature, the inner recesses of the minds of men and women, with special reference to their sexual psyche, as also his penetrating and extensive reading, especially the immortal Shakespeare, to good effect in writing about sex and marriage, a much-maligned and grossly misunderstood field. The writer brings to bear on the subject his fresh and original ideas with a disarming candour and acceptable aplomb in a manner and style, straight and directly appealing. Steeped in the writings of Bertrand Russell, his preceptor and mentor, and Shakespeare, Dr. Jacob covers the wide range and amplitude of influence of sex and the desideratum of ethical approach with commendable persuasiveness and convincing reasoning. The all-powerful and consuming puissance of sexual urge in youth, its potency in perverting even the best of minds, and the balancing forces and ballast that are essential for a sound and harmonious life are treated with clarity and completeness by the author, whose main theme is that the sex should always be tempered with morality, on pain of degrading itself into libertinism and licentiousness, a danger inherent in every exercise of exuberant responsiveness, especially in youth, to sexual urge.

"Youth and sexual impulse"; "Why do sexual affairs fail"?, "Sex — its limitations", "Marriages, its success and failure", "Sexual knowledge", "Intercaste Marriages", "Divorce", "The Secret of Happy Married Life", "Celibacy", and "Conclusion" are the chapters in the book, in every one of which the author forcefully projects his convictions and courageous ideas, garnering his knowledge from various sources from Freud to latest writers, from the Bible to modern ethical precepts and practices.

Word-juggling V.R. Krishna Iyer, Retired Judge of the Supreme Court of India, contributes a weighty Foreword in his wonted way quoting extensively from authorities, and maintaining his ***betenoir*** with a hefty allegiance that is characteristic of him and his writings. He

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also concludes his comment with the author thus : "There will never be a generation of great men until there has been a generation of free women, of free mothers"— a quotation from Robert Ingersoll, the famous American lawyer and leader of rationalism there.

P. SURYANARAYANA MURTHY

Economic Conditions of Mediaeval Andhradesa - A.D. 1000 - A.D. 1500 : By Dr. K. Radha Krishna Murthy. Sri Venkateswara Publications, Tirupati. Price : Rs. 40.

"Economic Conditions of Madiaeval Andhradesa - A.D. 1000-A.D. 1500" is the Part I of the Ph.D. thesis of the author, submitted to the Karnatak University.

The book consists of three chapters. The first chapter contains the introduction, scope and significance of the subject, description of the sources of information, besides a brief description of the political history of Andhradesa and the factors shaping the economy of the area under study. Chapter two deals with the Rural Economy and describes the origin of Agraharams, type and situation of villages, land ownership systems, transfer of ownership by different methods and the various authorities operating in the rural and urban areas in the context of land and landholdings.

Chapter three continues the discussion on Rural Economy and discusses the size of landholdings, types of soils affecting the productivity of land, types of crops raised, the rules of tenancy and taxation, besides describing the facilities needed for agriculture and the occupations connected with land. It describes some of the allied activities like horticulture, floriculture, pissiculture and dairying, though briefly.

The statements made in the body of the thesis are all well-documented and are well-supported by the sources indicated. The language is simple and does not contain the technical jargon. The author apparently intends this book to serve as a text-book for the degree students on the subject and more particularly for those who follow the cores syllabus in the different universities in Andhra Pradesh. The author hopes to bring out the Part II of this thesis shortly. One can hope that the forthcoming volume will be equally informative and readable.

Dr. B.P. RAO

SAMSKRIT -ENGLISH

Mulamadhyamakarikas of Nagarjuna - The Philosophy of Middleway : By J. Kalupahana. Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi - 7. Price : Rs. 175.

This is quite a new translation of *Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakarikas* which is a Buddhist classic. The author, a scholar endowed with critical acumen, felt convinced that Chandrakirti, a famous commentator on Nagarjuna's *Madhyamakarika*, was leading away the readers from Nagarjuna's philosophic point of view and that Kumarajiva who was a close disciple of Nagarjuna, and who was prior to Chandrakirti by atleast two centuries, recorded Nagarjuna's views correctly in his work "Chung-lun". Hence, the author asserts that one has to look at Nagarjuna through Kumarajiva's eyes. This translation with annotations, evidently, is based on this conviction and hence new, unlike many others in the field.

The author attempted to put into perspective the philosophical and spiritual nature of Nagarjuna which has been exaggerated beyond limits more by modern scholars than by the classical Buddhism. *Madhyamakarikas* destroyed the weeds that had grown around the Buddhist.

Karikas given in Samskrit, in English transliteration are followed by a translation. All praise for the author who in his annotations substantiated his statements in his introduction.

All in all, this is a non-prejudicial, balanced and authentic presentation of

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Nagarjuna's philosophy, taking into consideration all the interpretations and views of old and modern commentators and critics of both East and West and hence, gives a correct and complete view of Madhyamakarikas.

—B. KUTUMBA RAO

SAMSKRIT - TELUGU

Sri Bhagavadgitamritamu : With Telugu and Samskrit Commentaries : By Sriman K.S. Ramanujacharyulu and Srimad Vara Vara Muni. In two Volumes. Price : Rs. 20 each.

Sribhaashya Saaramu : By Sriman K.S. Ramanujacharyulu. Price : Rs. 25.

Goda Grandhamaala, Musunuru - 521 207.

The above books under review are highly commendable, in view of the fact that a normal understanding of the ***Gita*** and ***Sri Ramanuja Bhaashya,*** without any dialectical intricacies, is made easy by these.

Bhagavadgitamritam: The Telugu commentary "Gitamritam", gives word-for-word meaning of the verses in prose order and the import thereof in simple Telugu. The Samskrit commentary in addition to word-for-word meaning in "anvaya" method, gives the Vigrahavakyas of Samaasas, derivations of words, and significance of some particles and words. Thus a student can not only understand the ***Gita,*** but can learn Samskrit also. Addition of "Geetaardha Samgraha" of Sriyamuna with translation at the end of every chapter is another important feature.

Sribhaashya Saaramu — true to its name — gives the essence of Sri Ramanuja's Bhaashya on Brahmasutras. Main conclusion of each ***adhikarana*** is given generally in one sentence in Telugu at the beginning of each ***adhikarana.*** Brahmasutra in Sanksrit follows. Words in each Sutra are split up and word-for-word meaning is given. Then follows an easy exposition omitting all polemical discussions in the original Bhaashya in Sanskrit. Differences in the readings of Sutras are pointed out. This volume serves as a stepping-stone to the study and understanding of ***Sribhaashya.***

B.K. SASTRY

Telugu Praakrita Bhaashotpatti : By M. Venkata Ramachandra. Price : R. 20.

Telugulo Pallipadaalu : Compiled by Dr. Ch. Rama Rao. Price : Rs. 10. Telugu Goshthi, Ramanagar, Hyderabad – 500 044.

Telugu language is closely allied to Praakrit languages. Hence an elementary knowledge atleast of Praakrit is a ***sine qua non*** to those that are interested in Telugu linguistics. The first book under review fulfills this demand. This is the second edition of the book first published in 1921. Freed from printing mistakes, the text in this edition is divided into sections with titles and sub-titles. That Sanskrit was once the spoken language of the cultured Sishtas and that others spoke different Praakrita dialects is shown here with evidence. Relationship between Sanskrit and Praakrits is also pointed out. Pali is one of the Praakritas. Origin of the Gadhaa language, phonetic transformation in Praakrit languages, grammatical rules, declensions of nouns and conjugation of verbs therein are all explained, making this a perfect elementary Praakrit grammar book.

The second book under review is the result of painstaking research of Dr. Rama Rao. 239 Telugu words are picked up and their origin and development from Sanskrit and Praakrit are explained. Caldwell's theory that Telugu is mainly allied to Tamil and Dravidian languages is questioned now. These two books together form a good guide and stepping-stone for further research in this direction.

B. KUTUMBA RAO

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TELUGU

Mahaakavi Raghunaatha Bhupaaludu : By Dr. R.L. Kameswara Rao. For copies : Author, 16-433, Usman Nagar, New Malakpet, Hyderabad – 500 036. Price : Rs. 80.

This work on hand celebrates the towering and multifcated genius of Raghunatha Bhupaala of Tanjore. Among the Nayaka kings of Tanjore Raghunatha Nayaka (1580-1631 A.D.) is considered the most distinguished one. He was not merely a great king and good warrior but a patron and connisseur of fine arts, besides being a builder of temples too.

Raghunatha was such a great scholar in Sanskrit (and Telugu) that Yajnanarayana Deekshita, the son of his Chief Minister, Govinda Deekshita, had his education under him, which he gratefully acknowledges in his works, besides writing *Sahitya Ratnakara* and *Raghunatha Vilasa Nataka* in Sanskrit.

A scholar, poet and artist in his own right, Raghunatha is known as the author of some thirteen works, nine in Telugu and four in Sanskrit. Of these, five in Telugu and one perhaps in Sanskrit, are not extant. These in their chronological order are *Paarijaataapaharanam, Gajendramoksham, Rukmini - Krishna Vivahamu, Jaanakee Kalyanamu, Achyutaabhyudayamu, Nalacharitramu, Savitricaritra, Ramayanamu* in Telugu, *Valmikicaritramu*, a Prabandha, *Ramayana Saara Samgrahamu* in Sanskrit, *Bhaarata Saara Samgraham* in Sanskrit, *Samgeeta Saara Sudha*, and *Bharata Sudha*. The first seven are thought to have been before the battle of Topur in 1616 A.D. and the rest afterwards.

As a builder of temples Raghunatha was responsible for the Subrahmanya temple in the Brihadeeswara temple complex in Tanjore and the Ramaswamy temple at Kumbhakonam, besides the sixteen Mandapams at the Mahamakham tank there.

The author of the present work has faced his task with verve and boldness. The result is a satsifying work of absorbing interest. It is divided into five *Taramgams* (waves or tides). The more outstanding parts of the work are the attempted comparative study of *Sangeeta Ratnakara* and *Sangeeta Sudha* in so far as the first four chapters go, the elucidation of Veenaavaadana in *Savitricharitram* and *Nalacharitram*. These works of Raghunatha are veritable storehouses regarding the playing of the Raagas like Naata, Gauli, Varaali, Jayantasena, Bhairavi Sankaraabharana and Sri as also the *Pancataaleswara Prabhandha* in Taala. The author has given extensive information when he elucidated the argumentation between Rambha and Urvasi regarding their personal supremacy in music and dance.

The success of any earnest work is the satisfaction it yields. The author deserves to be congratulated for his effort in providing a satisfactory work. A worthwhile book for all students of literature and arts.

Dr. SALVA KRISHNAMURTHY

Prahlada Charitha – A comparative study of Errana's and Potana's poetry : By Dr. Nandula Gopala Krishna Murthy, Lecturer, Telugu P.G. Department, Government College, Rajahmundry – 5. Price : Rs. 20.

The importance of comparative criticism is stated by Max Mueller thus : "The doctrine that all higher knowledge is gained by comparison, and rests on comparison is as true and important in the study of literature also".

This is true. But if the critic's mind is not sound the comparative study would be dangerous. The students of Telugu literature still remember the bitterness of comparative criticism when the Telugu critics compared Nachanasomana with Errapraggada and declared that

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the former's poetry was far superior to the later. This hasty statement was strongly condemned by late Rallapalli Anantakrishna Sarma. He drew the subtle differences between the two poets and established the heights of Errana's poetry.

But in this study, the author has nicely drawn all the good features of the two kinds of poetry under various headings, without taking sides. Errana is a century ahead to Potana. The ojectives of the two poets are different. Errana is a descriptive poet and a pioneer to Prabandha poets like Peddana, Timmana, etc. Potana is a devotional poet, Errana's style is descriptive. Potana's is ecstatic. As such, Potana's poetry captures the readers instantly.

The style of Errana is a thought-provoking one, whereas the style of Potana is musical with all its alliterations which are essential for devotional poetry. The objects of the episodes are subtly different. Errana's episode is to establish the supremacy of Lord Vishnu in Narasimhaavataara. As such the treatment of the plot is philosophical. Potana's episode is to establish the supremacy of devotion of Prahalada. As such there is much conflict in the story which attracts people very easily. Dr. Murthy briefly deals with all these points and concludes that the two are great poets in their own way. But the overhead poetry of Ptana is unique.

The writer's concept that the non-dualist is one who does not differenciate between Lord Vishnu and Siva is not correct. (P. 95)

Since psychological conflicts, dramatic irony universalisations are the life of Potana's poetry, it is to be esteemed as superior. There are still people who read verses from this episode as part of their prayers daily. The efficacy of Potana's poetry on people's mind is indelible.

Dr. B. PURUSHOTHAM

"TRIVENI" INDEX

Sri N.S. Krishna Murthy, an advocate, scholar, writer and critic, has — as a love of labour — prepared an INDEX for the articles published in TRIVENI from 1928 to 1970 — both author-wise and subject-wise. Our readers and research students may avail themselves of this opportunity and write to the Triveni Office for their requirements. We shall be happy to extend our services to them.

— Editor, *Triveni*.

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THE RELIGION OF THE WORLD

H.H. JAGADGURU SRI CHANDRASEKHARENDRA SARASWATI
Sankaracharya of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham

THERE ARE EVER so many religions in this world. Each has a separate name of its own to distinguish it from the others. All these names are personal and are derived from the founders of the respective faiths. Thus Buddhism takes its name from its founder, Lord Buddha, Jainism from Jina, Muhammadanism from its prophet, Muhammad, Christianity from Jesus Christ, Zoroastrianism (the religion of the Parsees) from its founder Zoroaster, and the Chinese religion, Confucianism, from its propounder, Confucius. No doubt all these founders of new religions have been great men possessing the power to attract many men to their way of thinking. Thus every religion other than ours has a distinctive name of its own. But if you ask a youngster belonging to our religion what religion he professes, he would, if he happens to have received a little English education, at once reply that he belongs to the Hindu Religion. On the other hand if we ask our peasants about the name of our religion, they would be at a loss to give a common name to it. If we put the same query to those employed in writing negotiable documents in the South of India, they would describe themselves as they do at the top of these documents, as belonging to the Saivite or the Vaishnavite cult. These are really subdivisions in our faith and cannot be taken as representing the whole of it; but even these names are not derived from those of any historic personages but merely follow the names of the respective divine forms selected for personal worship. If Hinduism is really the name of our religion, it should have been known and described as such even during the period of our remote forefathers. But it would appear that to our ancestors of even a few centuries back, the name 'Hinduism' would have been a strange and meaningless term. It is so because ours is a religion without a name.

No doubt the subdivisions in our faith go by certain specific names. These again take their names only after the various forms of the one Almighty selected for *upasana* and not after human beings. For the general faith however it would be difficult to find a common name. Of late a name has been much in use, viz.,

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Sanatana Dharma, but even this cannot be said to be the strictly traditional name of our religion, for in that case it should be known as such to the poor peasant and to the humble widow, as in the case of the followers of other man-made religions. But such is not the case.

The term Hinduism is really a name somebody has presented us with. We can find in History a clue as to how this term came to be coined. Our forefathers were once the inhabitants of the region watered by the river Sindhu (the modern Indus) which, to some foreigners who came into contact with us, was known as Indus. From this they christened the land in which this river flowed as the Indu Desa or "the land of the Indus". Naturally and in course of time they applied this name to the entire Bharatavarsha of which the part watered by Sindhu formed but a slice. Are we not familiar with the saying that beyond Hyde Park all is desert?

Again, every religion has some distinguishing symbol which at once marks it off from the others. The Cross of the Christians is one such example. The Hindus, on the other hand, have no apparent symbol to point to as being common to all of them. As we are without a name, even so are we without a common symbolising badge. Ours, therefore, appears to be a religion without a name and a distinguishing mark! For instance, some of us wear the sacred ash, while others wear the "Vishnupad" on their foreheads. Some among us are "Vira Vaishnavas" and an equal number the "Lingayats" and similar others are "Vira Saivas". All these, however, have the consciousness that they are the adherents of one common religion.

The real grandeur of our faith consists in its being nameless. The need for names for an article arises only when there are many of that type so that each could, in some way, be distinguished from the others. But if there is one and one only of that article, why need a name for it? To take a concrete instance, if there are, say, four Ramasvamis in a village we must give them different initials or personal names to tell the one from the other or otherwise distinguish between them by calling one of them, Ramasvami, the dark, another of them, Ramasvami, the fair, and so forth. If there be only one Ramasvami, there is hardly any further naming required.

Even so, with our religion. What is religion? It is that which shows us the way out of this miserable cycle of births and deaths or in other words sins and sorrows. It was pointed out at the outset that other religions are known by the names of their respective founders. These religions therefore did not exist before the rise of these great personages. Specific dates are assigned to every such religion. It naturally follows that ours is a religion which existed before all these other faiths were born. Thus it should have existed at a time when it was the only religion in the world, administering to the spiritual needs of humanity as a whole. This then explains our religion not having had a specific original name, as there was no second religion from which this name should distinguish it. It was merely the Dharma – a word synonymous with Religion.

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It would appear then that its having no specific name is itself a distinctive symbol. Although the religion has no distinguishing name of its own there is in it a common basis – viz., the faith in the final authority of the Vedas, i.e., *Veda Pramanyam*, in spiritual matters. This is also implied in the saying current in some of our mother-tongues that makes the Vedas a simile for authoritativeness!

The question then arises that, if ours was the only religion prevalent at the time, were our religious principles observed by all the inhabitants of the world? We can now give plenty of instances to show that the reply to this question is in the affirmative.

For instance, one of the charges against Jesus which made the Jews crucify him was that Jesus drank water from a well intended for the lower classes. Does this not imply the existence of a caste system before Jesus' time?

Again an inscription unearthed in Egypt, dated 1280 B.C., contains the terms of a treaty between Rameses II and the Hittites. In this treaty the Vedic deity, *"Maitravaruna"*, has curiously enough been cited as the witness! (*See* H.R. Hall's "Ancient History of the Near East" – pp: 364 *et seq.*) Besides, in the ancient Egyptian Chronology, we find a series of kings bearing the name of Rama as for example, Rameses I, Rameses II, Rameses III, etc.

In the island of Madagasgar off the Eastern coast of South Africa, as many as seventy-five per cent of the names of places happen to be Sanskrit names. Most of them are akin to the name of the hero of the *Rama yana*, Rama.

We are all aware of the great Sahara Desert in Northern Africa. There is a theory that all deserts once formed Sanskrit, Sagaras. Is the suggestion far-fetched, that the modern name, Sahara, is a corruption of the Samskrit "Sagara"? It is said that while the Sahara was under water there was a thick population around its banks and that the names of those people were mostly Samskrit and were even related to the name of Rama. (*See* Encyclopaedia Brittannica, Vol. XXIII, Title — Sahara.)

Evidences such as these are not wanting in the opposite part of the globe. In distant Mexico a festival is being celebrated at about the same time as the Indian "Navaratri" or "Dusserah" and it is known as *"Ramasita"*. (*See* p. 56 of the Text and Plate 24 in the T.W.F. Gann's *The maya Indians of Southern Yucaton. North and British Honduras.*) Further, the excavations made in that country have resulted in an abundance of the idols of Lord Ganesa being unearthed (Baron Humboldt quoted in Har Bilas Sarda's *Hindu Superiority, p. 151*). The ancient inhabitants of those parts were "Astikas" (i.e., those who believed in *Veda Pramanyam* or the authoritativeness of the Vedas) a term which still lingers in the modern name "Aztecs" which is now given to this group!

In Peru, a country in the West of South America, the inhabitants were sun worshippers. Their principal festivals of the year fell on the solstices. (*See* Asiatic Researchers, Vol. I, p.426) They were known as the *"Incas"*, a name derived from one of the names of the Sun, *"Ina"*.

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While speculating in this strain, it is tempting to make another observation on the remarkable similarity between a series of names of places in California and several *puranic* names. We have all heard of the well-known story of the sixty thousand sons of King Sagara being burnt to ashes by the sage Kapila, to save whose souls their descendant Bhagiratha is said to have brought down the Ganga to the earth. The story goes that the horse sought for by the sons of Sagara was found in the netherlands *(Patala Loka)*. America being roughly India's antipodes on the globe, is this description of that land in the Puranas as the netherland to be laughed at? Is it not very suggestive that *California* might be a corruption for *"Kapila Aranya"* (Kapila's forest), and that the two islands nearby, viz., *"The Horse Island"* and *"The Ash Island"* might represent the places where the horse of King Sagara was kept and where King Sagara's sixty thousand sons were burnt to ashes?

Figs. 128 and 129 in page 621 of the *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, by Spencer and Gillen (Macmillan, 1899) depict a kind of dance said to be current among the wild native tribes of Australia. This dance is described in the book as *The Siva Dance*. On closer examination, the dancers appear to have painted on their forehead a third eye, a fact suggestive of the possibility that the people of even such distant lands as Australia were once well-versed in Vedic lore.

Nearer home in the Eastern Archipelago evidences of the prevalance of the Hindu Faith are abundant. Java bristles with relics of Hindu cult and worship. In Borneo there is a forest which the Westerners were for a long time describing as a virgin forest, i.e., not having been penetrated by man (Wallace —*The Malay Archipelago*, pp. 44-45). A party of explorers, after they had gone a few hundreds of miles, discovered a stone which contained an inscription commemorating in detail the performance of some specified *Yagas* and *Yajnas* (Vedic sacrifices) by a certain king (Yupa inscriptions of Mulavarman of Koeti, Borneo).

All these evidences only go to prove that our religion which was the only religion the world possessed for a long time, had spread all over the world.

It will not be out of place to examine here some conceptions of Hinduism about the Universe. The common Hindu belief about our terrestrial globe is that it is composed of seven *Dvipas* or land masses. Adi Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya refers to this in the following sentence in one of his books: *Sapta dvipa cha medinee.*

Each one of these *Dvipas* consists of several *Varshas* each of which in turn consists of several *Khandas*. Our country India has been described in our scriptures as *Bharata Khanda* said to be a part of Bharata Varsha, which in turn is supposed to be situated in *Jumbudvipa*. Mount *Meru* is supposed to be to the north of all the seven *Dvipas*. There is an ocean belt between every two *Dvipas*. The sun and the moon are said to move round *Meru*.

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Let us now examine in detail the real import of these conceptions. The Westerners teach us in our geography books that the earth is round and we think that this truth was first revealed to us by them. The Samskrit term for "geography" is *"Bhugola"* which itself means *"the round earth"*. Is not the very existence of this word proof of the fact that our ancients were aware of this fundamental geographical truth about the spherical nature of the earth? In the ancient Indian mathematical science, words such as *"Khagola"* and *"Bhugola"* occur which are further evidences in support of the above. In our *Sankalpa Mantras* we use the word *"Brahmanda"* while referring to the earth. The term *anda* in this word really means an egg, i.e., an oval-shaped body!

Let us now imagine the whole earth as a lime fruit with that part of it containing *"Meru"* (Himalayas) directed towards the north as its apex. Then *"Meru"* becomes the north pole and, hence, the northernmost point on the earth. This position, then, will sufficiently explain the saying; *Sarveshamapi Varshanam Merurutlaratah Sthitah*. The rest of the sphere is all to the south of it. To the eye of a man standing on the apex of it, the sun and the moon would appear to go round it, i.e., the sun would not be exactly overhead at any part of the year, but would always be to a side of it. This is what is meant by the statement in our *Sastras* that the sun goes round *"Meru"*. There is thus nothing in these conceptions which could be considered as being contradicted by modern geographical discoveries.

All the modern discoveries about the geography of our earth seem, therefore, to have already dawned on our ancient seers. References to these truths are also found in the works of Aryabhatta, Varahamihira, and Appayya Dikshita.

Thus we come back to the truth which we established at the outset, viz., ours was the only religion extant on the face of the earth for a long time. All the other religions of the world have only taken up and developed some phases of our bigger faith which contains all the aspects of the different religions.

With a little propaganda characterized more by kindness and love than by conceit and arrogance, it might yet be possible for us to convince others of this truth.

— From a discourse in 1931

●

"Among the common virtues to be practised by all human beings, **Ahimsa** is the foremost. So says the Manu Dharma Sastra. Not hurting others by our limbs alone is not **Ahimsa.** We must not speak such words as will hurt the feelings of others. We must not even think ill of others. The main fruit of practising **Ahimsa** is controlling the mind. There is a secondary, side-benefit also. If one does not do harm to others by his body, mind or tongue, those beings that near him with the idea of doing harm to him, will forget that idea and become nonviolent".

Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati

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A LIVING FLAME

K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU

[When His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Mahaswami completed fifty years of his accession to Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham "Triveni" offered her loving homage to him. Sri K. Ramakotiswara Rau, the Founder-Editor, paid his tribute through the columns of "Triveni " (April 1957). It is reproduced hereunder.

—Editor]

THE PUBLIC OF INDIA, and especially of the South, recently celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the accession of His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati to the *Gadi* of Sri Kamakoti Peetam at Kanchi. His Holiness was a lad of thirteen when his pontificate commenced. Five decades have passed since then, and each decade has meant added lustre to this ancient seat of spiritual power and beneficence. All over India, and in many foreign lands, the name of the Acharyaswami is deeply reverenced, and whenever the Peetam is mentioned there is an outpouring of rare devotion. As an embodiment of the traditional culture of India, and a discerning admirer of the nobler aspects of every other culture, the Acharyaswami has been a Light of all aspiring souls.

It is pleasant to recall that the Acharyaswami was one of the earliest to recognise the literary gifts of the late K.S.Venkataramani. Venkata ramani included a fine sketch of the Acharyaswami in his delightful 'Paper Boats'. When Venkataramani published his great novel of contemporary Indian life, 'Murugan the Tiller', the Acharyaswami attached such significance to the novel that he purchased several hundred copies of the book and sent them to the Members of the British Parliament and to leading writers and thinkers. In later years, the Acharyaswami presented an inscribed ivory shield and embroidered shawls to Venkataramani who always cherished them as his choicest treasures. This is but a single instance out of many gracious tokens of the Acharyaswami's patronage of creative endeavour in many spheres.

'Triveni' offers loving homage to the Acharyaswami on this great occasion and trusts that the Samskrita University proposed to be reared in his honour will soon be inaugurated.

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LAMP OF LOVE

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

[Sri K. Chandrasekharan, an erudite scholar and literateur, a great devotee of His Holiness the Paramacharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, was associated with "Triveni" almost from the beginning. He was a member of its Advisory Board until his passing away in August 1988. In the following article published in "Triveni " (April 1957) he paid a glowing tribute to His Holiness. It is considered appropriate to reprint the article on this auspicious occasion.

—Editors]

IT IS ONE of the great handicaps of religious institutions and Mutts in this ancient land that these seats of spiritual solace and guidance fall often to partisan spirits. In this, perhaps, it shares the tendency of all institutions, whether religious or otherwise, which are independent of popular judgment. No doubt in a profession of a highly competitive nature as the legal or medical, the best talent never fails of recognition, if once it can secure the appreciation and confidence of the public. But if it happens to be a writer or an artist of authentic merit and originality, the Academies too will not show any real enthusiasm or haste to choose him as their leader. They may either give him lukewarm praise or render help to him grudgingly and that too of necessity, but they will reserve their prizes and awards only for those who share their views on art and literature and have no independent minds of their own. The same is true of religious institutions, and never more true than in times of waning faiths and wavering allegiances. The fact that the highest recognition of any leader lies in the wide publicity he receives in the press today, may not affect the claim to acceptance from a vast mass of followers, which sometimes a great teacher may be able to achieve. For ultimately all true acceptance of leadership comes from within and not from external compulsion.

We can certainly instance the truth of it by the case of the Acharyh swami of Kamakotipeetam. If Advaitic thought and pure Hinduism has an exemplary representative in these days, it is the Jagadguru, Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakotipeetam—a saint who, more than any-

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one else, has given fresh impetus and direction to the spiritual upsurge of the times. There are others, no doubt, whose humanitarianism is no less than his; but there have been few in whom it is so informed by true Hindu ideals, so much emancipated from grooves of narrowness, and in whom it has glowed with such a steady light. To know him, to come under the magnetic influence of his large, lustrous, benediction-shedding eyes, is to feel existence at its purest and best. It is to pass into the Kingdom of God. The mental poise that comes to us very occasionally, the faith that easily dries up in us, are in him ever in an increasing measure and advancing the cause of others. His emotions are under strict control and never allowed to impress the sentimental and the sanctimonious; but they are never stifled, for they are completely transmuted by the superior wisdom inherited by him from a line of great Acharyas who had adorned the seat, in order to infuse continuity and purpose to the energies they generate. Precept and practice are so proportionately mixed up in him that anyone approaching him does not fail to mark his detachment, though equally impressed by his extraordinary mastery of worldly facts, his qualities of statesmanship and organisational drive. There has been none in our times who seems so absolutely devoid of any desire to make demands on anyone or anything in order to sustain even his minimum needs. He is strikingly all-comprehending, and yet so approachable and simple. His influence, to use a famous Western saint's description of Godhead, is "like a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere". He possesses a widespread compassion for all and yet secures to everyone individually the intimacy and confidence in his unobtrusive sympathies. Austerity and love have scarcely been so happily betrothed to each other, and added to them is a rare memory for details and an administrative genius of a high order.

Yet at a juncture in our country when spiritual resources were conspicuously misapplied and betrayed a considerable want of one-pointed devotion to the higher ends of man, the Acharyaswami came to the Peetam consecrated by the illustrious Bhagavatpada, who had established the religion of fearlessness foursquare against all violent winds of atheism that blowed over the land once. The Acharyaswami's is a powerful vision and a widely embracing one, so that it could not be allowed to add merely lustre to the office of a religious head. The excellence of his subtle intellect, the rareness of his gifts, his flair for languages, are universally known; but the breadth of his outlook, his entire concentration on saving swerving mortals from their distractions, places him outside the pale of normal *Mataadhipatis*. He belongs to humanity even more than he belongs to this school of philosophy or that. The Kamakotipeetam Mutt cannot but adhere to hidebound traditions. It believes in certain forms of undiluted orthodoxy and can spare, if at all, only conventional delinquents. Hence its lack of a sense of realism and aloofness from modernism and also its obscurity otherwise, even while some of its exponents had been personalities of great spiritual grandeur.

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It is this tradition that has made the Acharyaswami to be perennially employed in *pujas* and purificatory baths. Still the heritage of Adi Sankara is admittedly gaining in him its original glory. It makes a profound appeal even to the uninitiated. The quiet yet real austerity of the Acharya- swami is its chief attraction, qualified only by his inordinate sense of renunciation. He plays no mean part in the spiritual renascence we are experiencing. His name is ever borne far and wide on wings of the faithful and the unfaithful alike, for both seem to have a strong faith in him and his redeeming qualities. To one and all his name is a magic *mantra*. It has a charm of its own that, for them, no other contemporary name, with the exception of the late Jagadguru of Sringeri, possesses. It is like a shower of rose water on a hot summer noon.

If we probe the mystery of his magnetism, we shall be only finding ourselves dwelling upon the mystery of his indwelling spirit. He is a representative of Advaitic philosophy, though Advaita itself is not a *mata* in the sense other Indian philosophical persuasions are known to students. It has recognised the existence of One supreme spirit pervading all creation and hence its non-recognition of a second. Only when there is a second is there room for anything like fear of it, and because of the fact that it re cognises the One without a second, it has generated in the human breast hope eternal of its high destiny, not to be destroyed by anything on earth. It is by this grand conception that the Acharyaswami's catholicity can be easily explained, not to speak of his own *Samskaras* and inner evolution which have endowed him with a magnificent humanity.

To turn to his attributes which have endeared him to high and low as well, is to live in an atmosphere rarefied by his grace. Long before he became famous he had ascended the *gadi*, yet it took nearly two decades for him to come into his own spiritual abode. When he was on his itineraries, he slowly gathered round him maturer minds who began to scan in that youthful figure and resplendent gaze a fund of spiritual power and guidance. The whole of his *yatra* (travel) was envisaged by him only in terms of his own sublimation through witnessing every nook and corner, every temple and sacred water of his dear Bharata-Varsha. Once when an intrepid interlocutor asked him "How do you assume Jagadguruship? Isn't it too patently absurd?", his quick reply was, "Yes, the misconception is not mine, for I have conceived of the entire universe to be my teacher, my Guru". Therein lies his superiority over others. Mere resourcefulness may be attributed to this reply of his, yet to the calmly reflecting mind it means really more than a passing sally of wit. The sage of Kamakoti Peetam never looks down upon anyone or any creature, even the animals of the Mutt share the same hospitality at his hands as his human disciples. The elephant, the camel, the cow, the bull, the calf, the dog, every little and big creature forming part of his entourage receives in full measure his personal attention and care even as every visitor to the Mutt and every devotee in his presence.

His discipline is something unusual, and not a wink can intrude upon his vigils. If he has an inborn

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taste for good music and a beautiful talent to give shape through his own voice to some of the musical ideas within, he will not forget the stern discipline that his *ashrama* should exert over him. Once on an evening at *pradosha* he recited to a rapt audience a sloka from the "Soundarya Lahari'. He paraphrased every line of the verse with his soft tenderly-intoned, spoken Tamil. He described the occasion when Goddess Saraswati, holding the Veena (Vipanchi) in her hands and tuning it began to sing, when all of a sudden she felt disturbed on hearing Goddess Parvati's words of encouragement to her music, sounding sweeter to her ears and even causing strangely a feeling of ill-attunement in her instrument which forced her to hasten to push it in its cover and relegate it to a corner. The Swami for a moment indulged in faultless Sindhu Bhairavi Raga, but only a moment, for with lightning effect came the check on himself and he made his music yield place to the words of the verse and their exposition. Indeed his control proved the stronger for his passion for music.

The Acharyaswami strikes one as working day in, day out, for the safe voyaging of the world in spiritual matters. Forgetful of his need for relaxation, sounding the depths of his soul in some totally far-off dusty village near a pond or pool of fresh water, he can go on performing his worship of Chandramoulisvarar with whatever offerings of fruit and flower the poor peasantry of nearby places can gather for him. The routine is never-changing. It is the routine through which he passes and repasses in order to reach his goal of serenity.

Serenity comes not through insouciance or complacency or through administration of potions of superstitious ritualism. It comes only through an enlargement of the mind, a sovereign outlook of optimism, a kindly gaze at seething life around and a splendid faith in practical Advaita. All these and more the head of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam has. In his spacious presence there is no room for smallnesses and intolerances. All is dissolved because no one has need for ego. All is understood, because all is bathed in the sunshine of his smile. He penetrates the heart of every adult and child with a consuming power, but he penetrates it with a balmy touch, never with a pricking motive. He clears the mind of the pedant and the pandit of the hanging cobwebs of confusion and undigested learning. He can, if he wants, easily enter into an argument of a highly metaphysical nature, only in order to prove how very essential *sastras* are for a mind to get disciplined in the search of Truth. But in the process, the person dealt with never shudders at the revelation, hardly feels touchy or discomfited—only the experience is salubrious enough to make him throw off his *erstwhile* drowsiness and feel awakened from a mental torpor.

He is a staunch student of archaeology and epigraphy, one of the few researchers—if the term may be applied in its best sense to him, — with no desire for credit of having discovered some of the most useful information in reconstructing the history of the Kamakoti Mutt. His speeches and talks, collected so far in print, are better appreciated by pro-

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fessors of history and scholars of antiquity for their fund of original material and their flood of light on topics baffling normal plodders in the field. In his religious discourses there is neither authoritarianism nor polemics.

He leaves narrow points of difference in the various schools of philosophy and wings the azure heavens of a vast perception of the true spirit. The whole series of his sermons may be called *Message of Hinduism*. They are embedded with gems of thought and naturalness of observation. He speaks in simple Samskrita and Tamil, sentences often of not more than half a dozen words, not snappy, but refreshingly linking the developing sequence of a thought into a whole, profound thesis. His philosophy is only love. There are no portals of the enlightened and the learned to that sanctorum, but all are of it, who care for sincerity and sacrifice, who hear there the voice of God and determine to follow it.

His devotees belong to all kinds of philosophical persuasions; but most of all his heart envelops those exiles from the old order, who have regenerated themselves as followers of a liberal Hinduism. For these, as for all those who make heavy sacrifices for keeping their integrity unsullied, he has not merely good feeling but wholesome regard. In his behaviour the impression he creates is of a superior type of generosity and charity. His mind lives in no stagnant pool, but shears its way through a hybridized world, and the tone of his conversation lifts the mediocre too from his ennui and blesses him with an unusual satifaction that he has not lived in vain.

Withal he is a rare specimen of Sanyasa, unaffected in his intellectual approach to problems and uncanny divination of the causes of our social upheavals. He is ready to forgive and forget any serious blemish in character with an air of utter unsophistication. If a boy of ten reading in a school, pretends to have filled pages and pages with the holy script of *Sri Rama Jayam* and makes the Acharyaswami believe him to be the scribe, while later he himself confesses to his elder brother alone having been the scribe, there is no evident twitch of fierceness of look in the face of the Jagadguru, but only a smile as he remarks, "So your brother has done this and feels shy to present it himself to me lest his classmates in the college should rail at him. Go and tell him not to feel any shame. Anyhow, you can take a gold coin for it with my blessings". The crowd round about watching the incident is really amazed first at the little urchin's audacity to play tricks with the Swami and equally amazed at the great one's intuitive divination of the cause of the boy's elder brother's folly, and much more amazed at the final words of comfort administered by the High Priest of Advaita to the young culprit.

His fifty years as the head of a great seat of spiritual administration have hardly robbed him of his ever innate desire for service to his fellowmen. His sixty-three years on this earth during times of cataclysmic changes have not warped his outlook or made it hard towards unbelievers and nihilists. His hopes are as ever bright, himself being ever ready to engage in an interesting argument with anyone of whatever reformist group or school of thought on an impersonal

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basis. He is, in short, an epitome of all that is permanent and great in the Hindu conception of a *Mumukshu*. He brings very valuable cargo with every voyage of his on the high seas of the spirit—that precious unction to the soul which needs it even more today than at any other time.

The great populace of South India has paid belated tribute to him in taking steps for founding a Samskrita University after his name, but his true sympathies are not for mere education in the Sastras, though he yields to none in wishing for a vigorous course of studies for a student planned according to the ancient way, which, according to him, is the only way. His genuine interest is in uplifting the masses from the morass of penury and the still worse penury of the soul. His growing indifference towards all former activities in connection with the Mutt administration is a clear indication of his realisation of the main purpose of his mission in life, which means certainly a blessing to the vaster humanity outside his fold.

"Our religion has survived for countless Yugas. There must have been some strong basis for this. The life-nerve of our civilisation is the division of society, without the prospect of their getting mixed up. Specific duties have been assigned for each division of society apart from tenets common to all."

"It seems that no other religion has been so old as ours. Unaffected by the various changes in the world, bearing attacks from within and without and refusing to die, it is surviving."

* * * * *

"Truth means the union of speech with the mind. Having one thing in the mind and speaking something different is untruth. That which will do good to people combined with kindness is Truth. As such Truth constitutes kind utterances combined with the peaceful nature of the mind. If one gets accustomed to speaking truth, whatever he says will become truth.

Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati

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WITH THE SPIRITUAL HEAD OF SOUTH INDIA

PAUL BRUNTON

WE ENTER CHINGLEPUT through a palm-fringed high way and find it a tangle of white-washed houses, huddled red roofs and narrow lanes. We get down and walk into the centre of the city, where large crowds are gathered together. We pass through a tiny doorway and enter a bare anteroom. At the far end there is a dimly-lit enclosure, where I behold a short figure standing in the shadows. I approach closer to him, put down my little offering and bow low in salutation. There is an artistic value in this ceremony which greatly appeals to me, apart from its necessity as an expression of respect and as a harmless courtesy. I know well that Shri Shankara is no Pope, for there is no such thing in Hinduism, but he is teacher and inspirer of a religious flock of vast dimensions. The whole of South India bows to his tutelage.

I look at him in silence. This short man is clad in the ochre-coloured robe of a monk and leans his weight on a friar's staff. I have been told that he is on the right side of forty, hence I am surprised to find his hair quite grey.

His noble face, pictured in grey and brown, takes an honoured place in the long portrait gallery of my memory. That elusive element which the French aptly term *spirituel* is present in his face. His expression is modest and mild, the large dark eyes being extraordinarily tranquil and beautiful. The nose is short, straight and classically regular. There is a rugged little beard on his chin, and the gravity of his mouth is most noticeable. Such a face might have belonged to one of the saints who graced the Christian Church during the Middle Ages, except that this one possesses the added quality of intellectuality. I suppose we of the practical West would say that he has the eyes of a dreamer. Somehow, I feel in an inexplicable way that there is something more than mere dreams behind those heavy lids.

I shall sweep through the earlier phases of this interview, because they are more concerned with myself than with the Hindu Primate. He asks about my personal experience in the country; he is very interested in as-

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certaining the exact impressions which Indian people and institutions make upon a foreigner. I give him my candid impressions, mixing praise and criticism freely and frankly.

The conversation then flows into wider channels and I am much surprised to find that he regularly reads English newspapers, and that he is well informed upon current affairs in the outside world. Indeed, he is not unaware of what the latest noise at Westminster is about, and he knows also through what painful travail the troublous infant of democracy is passing in Europe.

I remember Venkataramani's firm belief that Shri Shankara possesses prophetic insight. It touches my fancy to press for some opinion about the world's future.

"When do you think that the political and economic conditions everywhere will begin to improve?"

"A change for the better is not easy to come by quickly," he replies. "It is a process which must needs take some time. How can things improve when the nations spend more each year on the weapons of death?"

"There is nevertheless much talk of disarmament today. Does that count?"

"If you scrap your battleships and let your cannons rust, that will not stop war. People will continue to fight, even if they have to use sticks!"

"But what can be done to help matters?"

"Nothing but spiritual understanding between one nation and another, and between rich and poor, will produce goodwill and thus bring real peace and prosperity."

"That seems far off. Our outlook is hardly cheerful, then?"

His Holiness rests his arm a little more heavily upon his staff.

"There is still God," he remarks gently.

"If there is, He seems very far away," I boldly protest.

"God has nothing but love towards mankind," comes the soft answer.

"Judging by the unhappiness and wretchedness which afflict the world today, He has nothing but indifference," I break out impulsively, unable to keep the bitter force of irony out of my voice. He looks at me strangely. Immediately I regret my hasty words.

"The eyes of a patient man see deeper. God will use human instruments to adjust matters at the appointed hour. The turmoil among nations, the moral wickedness among people and the suffering of miserable millions will provoke, as a reaction, some great divinely inspired man to come to the rescue. In this sense, every century has its own saviour. The process works like a law of physics. The greater the wretchedness caused by spiritual ignorance and materialism, the greater will be the man who will arise to help the world."

"Then do you expect someone to arise in our time, too?"

"In our century", he corrects. "Assuredly. The need of the world is so great and its spiritual darkness is

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so thick that an inspired man of God will surely arise."

"Is it your opinion, then, that men are becoming more degraded?" I query.

"No, I do not think so," he replied tolerantly. "There is an indwelling divine soul in man which, in the end, must bring him back to God."

"But there are ruffians in our Western cities who behave as though there were indwelling demons in them," I counter, thinking of the modern gangster.

"Do not blame people so much as the environments into which they are born. Their surroundings and circumstances force them to become worse than they really are. That is true of both the East and the West. Society must be brought into tune with a higher note. Materialism must be balanced by idealism; there is no other real cure for the world's difficulties. The troubles into which countries are everywhere being plunged are really the agonies which will force this change, just as failure is frequently a sign-post pointing to another road."

"You would like people to introduce spiritual principles into their worldly dealings, then?"

"Quite so. It is not impracticable, because it is the only way to bring about results which will satisfy everyone in the end, and which will not speedily disappear. And if there were more men who had found spiritual light in the world, it would spread more quickly. India, to its honour, supports and respects its spiritual men though less so than in former times. If all the world were to do the same and to take its guidance from men of spiritual vision then all the world would soon find peace and grow prosperous".

Our conversation rolls on. I am quick to notice that Shri Shankara does not decry the West in order to exalt the East, as so many in his land do. He admits that each half of the world possesses its own set of virtues and vices, and that in this way they are roughly equal! He hopes that a wiser generation will fuse the best points of Asiatic and European civilizations into a higher and balanced social scheme.

I drop the subject and ask permission for some personal questions. It is granted without difficulty.

"How long has your Holiness held this title?"

"Since 1907. At that time I was only twelve years old. Four years after my appointment I retired to a village on the banks of the Cauvery, where I gave myself up to meditation and study for three years. Then only did my public work begin".

"I would like to meet someone who has high attainments in Yoga and can give some sort of proof or demonstration of them. There are many of your holy men who can only give one more talk when they are asked for this proof. Am I asking too much?"

The tranquil eyes meet mine.

There is a pause for a whole minute. His Holiness fingers his beard.

"If you are seeking initiation into real Yoga of the higher kind, then you are not seeking too much. Your earnestness will help you, while

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I can perceive the strength of your determination; but a light is beginning to awaken within you which will guide you to what you want, without doubt".

I am not sure whether I correctly understood him.

"So far I have depended on myself for guidance. Even some of your ancient sages say that there is no other god than that which is within ourselves", I hazard.

And the answer swiftly comes :

"God is everywhee. How can one limit Him to one's own self? He supports the entire Universe".

I feel that I am getting out of my depth and immediately turn the talk away from this semi-theological strain.

"What is the most practical course for me to take?"

"Go on with your travels. When you have finished them, think of the various Yogis and holy men you have met; then pick out the one who makes most appeal to you. Return to him, and he will surely bestow his initiation upon you."

I look at his calm profile and admire its singular serenity.

"But suppose, Your Holiness, that none of them makes sufficient appeal to me. What then?"

"In that case you will have to go on alone until God Himself initiates you. Practise meditation regularly; contemplate the higher things with love in your heart; think often of the soul and that will help to bring you to it. The best time to practise is the hour of waking; the next best time is the hour of twilight. The world is calmer at those times and will disturb your meditations less."

He gazes benevolently at me. I begin to envy the saintly peace which dwells on his bearded face. Surely, his heart has never known the devastating upheavals which have scared mine. I am stirred to ask him impulsively :

"If I fail, may I then turn to you for assistance?"

Shri Shankara gently shakes his head.

"I am at the head of a public institution, a man whose time no longer belongs to himself. My activities demand almost all my time. For years I have spent only three hours in sleep each night. How can I take personal pupils? You must find a master who devotes his time to them".

"But I am told that real masters are rare and that a European is unlikely to meet them".

He nods his assent to my statement, but adds :

"Truth exists. It can be found."

"Can you not direct me to such a master, one who you know is competent to give me proofs of the reality of higher Yoga?"

His Holiness does not reply till after an interval of protracted silence.

"Yes. I know of only two masters in India who could give you what you wish. One of them lives in Benares, hidden away in a large house, which is itself hidden among spacious grounds. Few people are permitted to

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obtain access to him; certainly, no European has yet been able to intrude upon his seclusion. I could send you to him, but I fear that he may refuse to admit a European."

"And the other ...?" My interest is strangely stirred.

"The other man lives in the interior, farther south. I know him to be a high master. I recommend that you go to him."

"Who is he?"

"He is called the Maharishee*. His abode is an Arunachala, the Mountain of the Holy Arcot. Shall I provide you with full instructions, so that you may discover him?"

A picture flashes suddenly before my mind's eye.

I see the yellow robed friar, who has vainly persuaded me to accompany him to his teacher. I hear him murmuring the name of a hill. It is : "The Hill of the Holy Beacon."

"Many thanks, Your Holiness," I rejoin, "but I have a guide who comes from the place."

"Then you will go there?"

I hesitate.

"All arrangements have been made for my departure from the South tomorrow," I mutter uncertainly.

"In that case I have a request to make."

"With pleasure."

"Promise me that you will not leave South India before you have met the Maharishee."

I read in his eyes a sincere desire to help me. The promise is given.

A benignant smile crosses his face.

"Do not be anxious. You shall discover that which you seek."

A murmur from the crowd which is in the street penetrates the house.

"I have taken up too much of your valuable time" I apologize. "I am indeed sorry."

Shri Shankara's grave mouth relaxes. He follows me into the anteroom and whispers something into the ear of my companion. I catch my name in the sentence.

At the door, I turn to bow in farewell saluation. His Holiness calls me back to receive a parting message :

"You shall always remember me, and I shall always remember you!"

And so, hearing these cryptic and puzzling words, I reluctantly withdraw from this interesting man, whose entire life has been dedicated to God from childhood. He is a pontiff who cares not for wordly power, because he has renounced all and resigned all. Whatever material things are given to him, he at once gives again to those who need them. His beautiful and gentle personality will surely linger in my memory .....

It is nearly midnight when I return home. I take a last glimpse overhead. The stars stud the vast dome of the sky in countless myriads. Nowhere in Europe can one see them in such overwhelming numbers. I run

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up the steps leading to the verandah flashing my pocket torch. Out of the darkness a crouching figure rises and greets me. "Subramanya", I exclaim startled: "What are you doing here?" The ochre-robed Yogi indulges in one of his tremendous grins.

"Did I not promise to visit you, sir?" He reminds reproachfully.

Of course!

In the large room I fire a question to him. "Your master — is he called the Maharishee?"

It is now his turn to draw back astonished.

"How do you know, sir? Where could you have learnt this?"

"Never mind. Tomorrow we both start for his place. I shall change the plans".

"This is joyful news, sir."

"But I shall not stay there for long though. A few days, may be."

I fling a few more questions at him during the next half hour and then thoroughly tired, go to bed. Subramanya is quite content to sleep on a piece of palm matting which lies on the floor. He wraps himself up in a thin cloth which serves at once as a mattress sheet and blanket and disdains offer of more comfortable bedding.

The next thing of which I am aware is suddenly awakening. The room is totally dark. I feel my nerves strangely tense. The atmosphere around seems like electrified air. I pull my watch from under the pillow and by the glow of its radium-lit dial discover the time to be a quarter to three. It is then that I become conscious of some bright object at the foot of the bed. I immediately sit up and look straight at it.

My astounded gaze meets the face and form of His Holiness Shri Shankara. It is clearly and unmistakably visible. He does not appear to be some ethereal ghost but rather a solid human being. There is a mysterious luminosity around the figure which separates it from the surrounding darkness.

Surely the vision is an impossible one! Have I not left him at Chingleput? I close my eyes tightly in an effort to test the matter. There is no difference and I still see him quite plainly.

Let it suffice that I receive the sense of a benign and friendly presence. I open my eyes and regard the kindly figure in the loose yellow robe.

The face alters, for the lips smile and seem to say : "Be humble and then you shall find what you seek." Why do I feel that a living human being is thus addressing me? Why do I not regard it as a ghost at least? The vision disappears as mysteriously as it has come. It leaves me exalted, happy and unperturbed by its supernormal nature. Shall I dismiss it as a dream? What matters it?

There is no more sleep for me this night. I lie awake pondering over the day's meeting, over the memorable interview with His Holiness Shri Shankara, the Heirarch of God to the simple people of South India.*

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H.H. SRI CHANDRASEKHARENDRA SARASWATI
His Contribution to Hinduism

Dr. (Miss) S.S. JANAKI

H.H. SRI CHANDRASEKHARENDRA Saraswati Svamigal of Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha is undoubtedly the foremost and the most dynamic among the Acharyas of Sankara lineage and one of the most powerful personalities of the present times. It is indeed our privilege and fortune to be living during the times of this epoch-making saint-scholar. Writing about him in 1963, Dr. Albert B. Franklin, the then Consul-General of the United States of America at Madras, said, "His Holiness is every man, and he is as old as man's ponderings. He is the man of faith, who has given away all that he had and follows only his faith. He is a symbol of that renunciation which is at the heart of all religions."

It is no wonder that the lowliest of the lowly, the highest among the high, the clever and the dull, the gentleman or the ruffian, the learned or the ignorant as well flock to have a glimpse of the Sage, whatever their purpose may be. And everyone who gets that yearned glimpse goes away with the satisfaction of a great desire.

In this connection it would be interesting to note that on 15th October 1927 the historic meeting of H.H. with Mahatma Gandhi took place during the latter's tour in South India. The meeting was held at a cow-shed in Nallicheri village. H.H. spoke in Sanskrit and Gandhi in Hindi. In their hour-long dialogue, they both affirmed their faith in a State founded on belief in God and spiritual power. The only point in which H.H. expressed his difference of opinion was on the question of temple entry by Harijans. A noteworthy thing that took place at this meeting of the two Mahatmas must be mentioned. It was getting to 5.30 P.M. As Gandhiji did not take anything after 6 P.M., Rajaji came and reminded Gandhiji of the time. Gandhiji said: "My conversation with Swamiji is my food today!" Swamiji gave Gandhiji a fruit which was with him and Gandhiji said it was a favourite fruit of his. Following Gandhiji's principle H.H. always uses only Khadi material for his ascetic garment.

Besides Mahatma Gandhi many political leaders, heads of Mathas,

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academicians, artists, etc., had all enjoyed the benign blessings of H.H. Similarly many distinguished foreign scholars had the privilege of interviewing H.H. These include among others, Paul Brunton (author of *The Search into Secret India*), Arthur Koestler (author of works like *Darkness at Noon* and *The Lotus and the Robot*), and distinguished Professors in Religion, Indian Culture and Indology from all parts of the world. Whoever it was with H.H., he was attracted to his personality, conduct and scholarship. His beaming eyes which beam a benediction and his inviting smile which casts a spell of intimacy, leave an everlasting impression on all those who have had the good fortune to have his Darshan.

II

H.H. belonged to a great Hoysala Karnataka Rigvedi Brahmin family, with Kannada as mother-tongue, and domiciled in Tamil Nadu. His ancestors had held offices in the Tanjore Nayak and Mahratta Courts. His grand-father Ganapati Sastri was Sarvadhikari of the 64th and 65th Sankaracharyas of the Kamakoti Pitha (1835-85). His mother came of the line of Govinda Dikshita, Minister of King Raghunatha Nayaka of Tanjore. H.H.'s Purvasrama name is Svaminathan.

True to his earlier name "Svaminathan" H.H. is a pastmaster in many branches of knowledge, languages and disciplines that include Sanskrit, English, French, Marathi, Tamil, theoretical and practical aspects of Vedanta and other Sastras, Vedic literature, astronomy, astrology, mathematics, temple-studies, music and epigraphy. In his school days he was a star-actor in Shakespeare's plays. In every branch of knowledge he excels the specialist in the field on account of his uncanny and intuitive knowledge of many things and their subtle aspects, and this is something very extraordinary. The simple and easy manner with which he expresses his ideas on the varied topics to the commoner and the specialist is something unique and typical of H.H.

III

Born in 1894 H.H. was ordained in 1907 as the 68th Sankaracharya of the Kamakoti Pitha at Kalavai near Kanchi. The Golden and Diamond Jubilees of the spiritual ministry of H.H., His Shashtyabdapurti and 71st Jayanti were celebrated in a fitting manner; now we are fortunate to witness his birth-centenary. Of course these celebrations are immaterial to him personally. He is as far beyond the titles and honours of this world as we, on our side, are in need of honouring him, as a way of symbolising our awareness of the reality he represents for us.

It is difficult for anybody to find a tribute in words for expressing one's admiration and gratitude towards H.H. However it is a privileged duty for many of us to look back on the life and contribution of H.H. during the last 100 years and share such ideas with others. I have had the privilege of being closely associated with the Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute at Madras for more than $2^1/_2$ decades in varied capacities. I value this connection most for more than one reason. Firstly, the Institute is located in the campus of the Sanskrit College, Madras, which is sanctified by the presence of H.H. on many oc-

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casions during his visit to Madras since 1932. Secondly, the single hall that houses the Institute since it was started in 1945 is named after H.H. as it was originally the place where he stayed and performed his Puja during his visits to Madras. Thirdly, the large collections of the library of the Institute have been used by H.H.; and finally many talks were delivered by H.H. in this vibrant atmosphere which were later published in three volumes under the title "The Jagadguru's Upadesas", and "Acharya's Call".

The contribution of the many-faceted and vibrant saint-scholar through his interviews, talks and his own exemplary conduct to diverse branches of knowledge and to human life itself are vast and varied. The rich information on this subject is available in more than 70 monographs, books and articles in journals. To carry out his teachings and instructions nearly 40 organisations have been set up in different parts of India at the instance or under the inspiration of H.H. All these details are available in the special issue of the *Journal of Oriental Research* brought out by the Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute in 1973, as a commemoration volume for H.H. on his completion of 60 years of the ministry as Sankaracharya of the Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha.

IV

We may now see in brief a few gleanings of the unique contribution of H.H. to religion, especially Hinduism, through many interesting ways that only H.H. can think of. Some of the modern Western Sanskrit anthropologists like Prof. Milton Singer, University of Chicago, U.S.A., have remarked that they "learned more about the essential foundations of orthodox Hinduism from H.H. than their study of it for two years or more at the universities". H.H. in one of his interviews, has said, "The distinctiveness of Hinduism does not rest in its philosophy, ethics, or theology, things which tend to be common to all schools and all religions. Hinduism adds to these a hereditary discipline based on family and caste, and the growth or decline of Hinduism is directly dependent on the social disciplines".

As a leading Acharya and an exponent of Hinduism H.H. was concerned with all religions, and practised religious tolerance throughout his headship of Kanchi Matha. During his first tour of India itself in 1919 he received followers of Islam and Christianity, and also Harijans, and discussed freely religious questions with them; and this attitude is being continued in the present times too.

H.H. had staunch Muslims as his devotees. In 1926 during his stay in Chettinad, when he was going for a sea-bath in a palanquin, a Muslim clung to the palanquin. When H.H. stopped, the Muslim read out verses in Sanskrit he had composed on the Acharya, wept, and told him, that he saw Allah himself in H.H. There was another Muslim who, hailing from a Sanskrit-knowing family, offered to H.H. at Salem in 1927, a set of verses, on H.H. composed by himself, one of which was set in the difficult pictorial design (Chitra-bandha) in the form of Siva-linga. Yet another sincere Muslim devotee of H.H. who contributed for the spread of Vedic studies considerably at Kumbhakonam in an

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organised manner, was Sri Kamaluddin, a sub-judge during 1961-63.

Repeatedly in his speeches too H.H. has maintained that there is no bar in religion. He felt that only spiritual understanding between one nation and another, and between rich and poor, would produce good-will and thus bring real peace and prosperity. When some scholars from India and the West were skeptical on this point, H.H. as a great optimist said, "There is still God".

According to H.H. Hinduism is a "nameless religion" that existed long before the founded religions. The very name "Hinduism" was unknown to our ancestors and is also not known to the common man among us. "Hindu" is a Persian word to denote an "Indian". Hence it is both a racial and religious term as first used by the foreigners after they came to know of the region of Sindhu. Hence 'Hinduism' is both a way of life and a highly organised social and religious system that has come down to us from times immemorial. According to H.H. Hinduism is obviously "the only religion in the world ministering to the spiritual needs of mankind as a whole".

Time and again H.H. has emphasised the fact that Hinduism can survive only by the Anusthana, the observance of religious rites of its votaries. These practices may slightly differ from one another, but it is preferable to perform them sincerely according to the practice in vogue (*sampradaya*) in one's family or as learnt from an authentic teacher. In order to inculcate the importance of such habits in the minds of different types of people H.H. suggested various ways imaginatively. A few of these implemented by H.H. during 1940-69 are—

1. During 1939-42 he toured the villages of Tanjore, Tiruchi, Pudukkottai and adjacent areas for organising the Mudradhikaris' scheme. In each village or part of a town or major street of a city, a Mudradhikari or a representative of the Math was appointed. The ideals of the Sangham or Association of these Mudra dhikaris included social service, fostering temple-worship, care of cows, sacred trees and holy waters, reading of Puranas, etc. Over 2000 of these units were established.
2. Sent a message with reference to the communal riot in Bengal and on the forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam and violation of Hindu women by Muslims; H.H. directed that those forcibly converted or violated be taken back and honourably received with due expiatory rites.
3. Advice to write out Rama-nama every day and bring or send the notebooks to the Math, and the Math giving or sending Prasada to such devotees.
4. Started in 1950 more than 100 associations called Vaara Vazhipaadu Sangam for doing devotional recitations, etc.
5. Adopted steps for the popularisation of the Ramayanas of Valmiki, Kamban and Tulasidas.
6. Presented Rudrakshamala to derserving devotees.
7. Started in 1953 an association for providing funeral arrange-

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ments for the dead bodies of the destitute Hindus.

8. In 1950 gave a message on the importance of the recital and exposition in Margasirsha month of the two hymns of Andal and Manikkavacakar, the Vaishnava and Siva saints, the Tiruppavai and the Tiruvempavai. Held big Tiruppavai-Tiruvempavai conferences for eight days, with programmes of recital and exposition of these two hymns which caught the hearts of the people and became most popular all over the Tamil country. The Tamil Siva Maths of Tamil Nadu co-operated with H.H. in this movement. Almost all the leading Tamil scholars, Bhagavatas and religious leaders have been taking part in these conferences. The movement helped to bring on the common platform of Bhakti the Vaishnavas and Saivas. The printing of these two poems, getting them by heart, their translations and setting them to tunes, singing them, gramophone records of these, all increased as a result of this movement. A central organisation was also set up for this and registered. In this connection H.H. drew public attention to the most interesting fact that the Tiruvempavai festival was being held every year, to this day at Bangkok, in Thailand. Select psalms from Devaram and Tiruvaimoli were printed and sent to over four lakhs of Tamil-speaking people in India, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, etc.

Sent Srimukhas and circulars on the need for religious practices to legislators, Congress-members, temple-authorities, school-managements, etc. and also distributed pamphlets to the large gatherings during temple-festivals in various centres. Free copies of Tiruppavai-Tiruvempavai were distributed by thousands to boys and girls; similarly copies of *Bhaja Govindam*, epitome of *Bhagavata*, Avvaiyar's *Vinayakar Ahaval*, *Tirumuruhattrupadai*, etc.

9. In 1963 consecrated the Sankara Matha and images of Adi Sankara and his four disciples in marble at Agnitirtha at Rameswaram. The entire monument is conceived by H.H. with great originality and imagination and is an epitome of Hinduism and Indian culture.

10. In October 1965 H.H. gave the message through the All India Radio that service to the country (Desa-seva) was on par with service to God (Isvara-seva). H.H. had a lakh of copies of a Hindi Stotra on Hanuman printed and circulated among the Jawans for courage and victory; appealed to the nation to contribute liberally to war fund and himself gave a contribution in gold.

11. In April 1966, H.H. promulgated the Pidi-arici-tittam, of everyone setting apart "a handful of rice", the same to be collected at a local temple, cooked and offered to God and then distributed to the poor.

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12. In August 1969 H.H. arranged for the distribution of a booklet containing the gist of the Bhagavadgita to all the graduates at the convocation of the Madras University.

13. Temples, holy lakes and pilgrimage-centres (Kshetras and Tirthas) abound in all parts of India. They are all loaded with symbolism and are the chief constituent institutions of Hinduism, and have a unifying influence. H.H. as a specialist in this field has explained the significance and essence of the above in many of his lectures and interviews. In order to communicate the ideas to a larger audience effectively, H.H. conceived of a new annual conference for inculcating values of Hindu Dharma through the time-honoured means of literature, folk arts and fine arts and the temples. The first of these was organised in 1962 on a grand scale for a week beginning on 13th September, at H.H.'s camp at Ilayattangudi in Chettinad, where there is the Samadhi of H.H.'s great grand-preceptor and predecessor. For the first time, Sivacharyas versed in Saiva Agamas, Bhattacharyas versed in Pancharatna and Vaikhanasa Agamas, came in large numbers and from all parts of Tamil Nadu and discussed the Agamas and temple-practices. For the first time again, traditional Sthapatis who built the temples and temple-cars gathered in large numbers and discussed Silpa texts and temple-architecture and sculpture and the building of temple-cars. Scholars came from all over India and outside and spoke on different aspects of Indian culture in the epics and their versions in regional languages, and on Indian culture in countries outside India. In the nights there were demonstrations of folk arts, dance-dramas like Yakshagana, Bhagavatanataka and forms of similar arts from Kerala and Tamil expositions of the epics, etc. The proceedings of the Sadas were later published in 1963, with numerous illustrations.

Similar informative conferences were held subsequently.

V

Such is the concern of the Mahaperiyavaal for the common man and the scholar. Rightly is he devoutly adored by his disciples and held in reverential esteem by numerous others for his scholarship in the Sastras, knowledge of modern developments, for his saintliness and for his inclusive universality of outlook and attitude. He is variously considered as a god-man, an incarnation of Siva, as an intuitive scholar and a superman. He is all this and much more. No doubt he remains the central figure in the universe, with the greatest consideration for mankind. May we be fortunate for many years to come to continue to enjoy his blessings and elevate outselves !

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"MEETING WITH PERFECTION"

DR. T.M.P. MAHADEVAN

IT WAS THE first of June, 1966, the fourth day of the Athens Meeting week. The Hill of the Phyx stood framed in a glorious sun-set on the east, facing the Acropolis to the east, crowned by the famous Temple of the Parthenon dedicated to Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom and Peace. It was on this Hill that the *ecclesia*, the convention of the people of Athens, used to meet of old. It was here that the orators, representing the people, addressed their fellow citizens. The Royal National Foundation could not have selected a better location for holding the Athens Meeting.

The Foundation was instituted by the late King Paul of the Hellenes : one of its major activities was the holding every other year, of an international cultural gathering in the capital of Greece; and it was called "The Athens Meeting". The object of the Athens Meeting was "to provide an opportunity for eminent contemporary thinkers from all over the world to express the human ideals and aspirations in the light of present knowledge and experience". Each invited scholar was to give a talk on a topic chosen by him on one of the evenings during the cultural week, in the open on the Hill of the Phyx. Six of the seven participants were to be invited from other countries. His late Majesty King Paul had indicated that this was being so done in the spirit of the ancient Greek thinker Isocrates, who said : "We call Hellenes all who partake of our culture."

The first Athens Meeting was held in 1964. His Majesty King Paul had passed away before this Meeting. But his son who succeeded him, H.M. King Constantine, was the moving spirit behind the whole enterprise. Encouraged by the success of this venture, the Royal National Foundation organized the Second Athens Meeting in 1966. On the 29th May this Meeting was inaugurated by the King in the Temple of Athena on the Acropolis. The lectures on the subsequent days of the week were given on the Hill of the Phyx. On the fourth day, the 1st of June, came my turn. I had chosen 'The Heritage of India' as my theme. Towards the conclusion of that speech I made the following observation :

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"There is a widespread doubt in the minds of intellectuals both in my country and abroad in regard to the future of the heritage of India in the face of the present encounter with science and technology. A visiting scholar from Yugoslavia expressed this doubt, a few months ago, to a living sage in South India, Sankaracharya of Kamakoti Pitham. The sage, who leads the ideal ascetic life as it obtained in ancient India, replied without any hesitation : "No damage will be done to the Soul of India. If anything, modern science and technical knowledge may serve to dispel the lingering superstitions and blind beliefs. The culture of India has many challenges, and has come out victorious each time. There could be no better authentic evidence to the immortal nature of India's heritage than the words of the Sage Sankaracharya. The heritage of India is not India's alone but of all mankind".

The reference to His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi in this passage was noted with particular relevance by the members of the Greek Royalty who were present at the meeting. Her Majesty Queen Frederika, Queen-Mother of Greece, and her daughter, H.R.H. Princess Irene, had been practising meditation for some time, and they were acquainted with Advaita-Vedanta through the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi. They had come to India earlier on a State visit along with the late Majesty King Paul : but then they did not have the opportunity or time to get to know closely the spiritual side of India. The Queen-Mother and the Princess expressed a wish to meet His Holiness on their next visit to India. It was in accordance with this wish of theirs that they came to India in November-December 1966, and met His Holiness. The meetings took place in Kalahasti on the 4th and 5th of December, 1966.

Her Majesty Queen Frederika, Queen-Mother of Greece, and Her Royal Highness Princess Irene came as seekers of truth; and they thought it supremely worthwhile to undertake this long journey, and were richly rewarded. The following is the gist of the interviews — the questions asked by the Royalty and the instructions given by His Holiness :

Q. Your Holiness! I am able to meditate with a measure of success while awake. But, the meditative experience does not come in dreams. What should be done to retain this attitude in the dreams also?

A. One need not worry about the kind of dreams one has. One who practises meditation in the waking stage, may not, when he goes to the dream state, experience the meditative attitude. The dreams may relate to non-spiritual phenomena. But the spiritual seeker should not be troubled over these; he should not think that such dreams constitute an impediment to his spiritual life. To think so, and to be troubled mentally would be an obstacle. What the seeker should be careful about is the waking life. He should devote as much of it as possible to the spiritual quest. If his endeav-

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ours in the waking state are in the direction of the Spirit, then gradually in dreams also one's spiritual nature will be reflected.

It is not dreams that affect waking life; it is the other way about. One who is fair-skinned in waking life usually dreams of himself in dreams as having fair skin. If he has dark-skin, in dream also he has a similar complexion. Thus, it is the experiences of waking state that get reflected in dreams, although in odd and queer forms. So, if the aspirant is vigilant in his waking state, and strives constantly to remember the Self, gradually in dreams also the same attitude will get reflected. If he succeeds in rendering his waking life free from violent passions and base desires, in course of time his dreams also will become placid and full of peace*.

Q. Will Your Holiness be pleased to prescribe a technique by which the concentration and equanimity of the mind may be facilitated?

A. Normally one breathes through one of the two nostrils, right or left. It is possible to change the breathing from one nostril to the other by effort. If the breathing is through the right nostril, and if it is to be changed to the left, what one should do is to put pressure on right side of the body, which could be done by resting the right palm on the ground and making the body lean on that arm. For a change from the left to the right, the pressure should be put on the left side. Before the actual change takes place, the breathing would be through both the nostrils for a short time, say, two seconds. This is what may be called equalised breathing. If one practises to observe the equalised breathing, its period will become longer and longer. And, the equalised breathing will facilitate the gaining of mental balance and equanimity. The more one practises this, the greater will be the progress in achieving the balance of mind, and the ability to remain unperturbed.

Q. If the surroundings are not salutory, if there are people who are hostile to one's mode of life, if everywhere one sees evil and wickedness, what should one do?

A. One may be surrounded by wicked people who are treacherous and evil in their ways. But one should not be impatient with them, or show hatred towards them. On the contrary one should have sympathy for them, and compassion. No person is wicked by nature, but circumstances and upbringing make him so. There is no reason, therefore, to hate him for what he has been made into.

* See the *Panchadasi*, a manual of Advaita (IV, 82) : Relinquishing contrary thoughts, if one meditates without interruption he would achieve meditation even in dreams, etc., because of the residual impressions.

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And also, an aspirant should not have hatred for anyone. He should reason thus : "Since the wicked person is so because of circumstances and upbringing, he is to be pitied rather than hated. What would I do if someone whom I hold dear, say, my son, turns to evil ways? I would strive to correct him through love. Even so should I treat the stranger. In fact, there is no stranger for a truth-seeker; for all are his kindred. What would be my plight if I had been born and bred in those evil circumstances? I too would be behaving in a wicked way. So, let me see the same Self in the wicked man; let me not hate him.

Q. What is the distinction between the *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* stages in *samadhi*? And, what is *sahaja-samadhi*?

A. *Savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* are stages in the path of concentration and meditation. In what is known as *savikalpa-samadhi* the mind is steady without any distraction, contemplating its object wholly absorbed therein. In *nirvikalpa samadhi* which is the goal of Yoga, the mind ceases to function, and vanishes once for all, leaving the self to shine forth alone. In Advaita too the path of meditation is recognised; but here the object of meditation is the distinctionless Brahman. What is called *sahaja-samadhi* is realised through the path of inquiry. It is the natural state of self-realization, and one of utter unconcern for the fleeting phenomena.

Q. What should a leader do in regard to customs, usages etc.? Even after he finds them to be not of any benefit for himself, should he follow them?

A. Those who are the leaders of a group, society, or state, should not neglect the established religious customs and usages. For themselves, they may not be in need of church-ceremonies, for instance, their advance in spirituality may not require these. But if they begin to neglect them, the people for whom the rituals are really helpful will also start neglecting them. This would be setting a bad example. In the words of the Bhagavadgita, "The wise one should not unsettle the minds of those who are ignorant, and are attached to action; on the contrary, he should encourage them to perform what they should perform, by himself doing the appropriate actions well and with diligence". It is a duty cast upon the leaders and those that are at the top to lead the people from where they are, and not to refrain from participation in the traditional ways of worship.

Recording the indelible impression of the interviews and the unique blessing gained by the *darsana* of His Holiness, Her Majesty has observed thus :

"The two days we spend in his company will never be forgotten. There was pure spirituality. What strange fate has brought us close to him!"

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Expanding the same impression, and reminiscing on what has been aptly described as the meeting with Perfection, Her Royal Highness said :

"Since some time now I find myself in a situation where there are no more quesions to ask (except for details). Yet identification with the self is far from constant. Nevertheless the practice of application will also contribute in making it more permanent so that there is really no problem. Then I believe that Fate brings things when time is ripe. And what came as Fate's great gift was this meeting with Perfection whose blessing is more than I am able to cherish without being deeply moved.

" He mentioned that the astronauts must have experienced outwardly that which is usually felt inwardly by spiritual seekers — an outer mystic experience. We had the Grace of having both the outer and inner mystic experience in His presence and we are thankful for it. He appeared as the vivid link between Spirit and matter, a link for the seeker which showed that they are not separate. The world of appearance with this Sage, who quite obviously was a guest in the frail body, was there, but the Essence, with which the guest is identical, was there too, demonstrating that the world is not different from it. His gaze made the self cast off all the bonds of the ego, thus unveiling a pure reflection of what those eyes are identified with. How can the beauty of this be witnessed with dry eyes?

"The greatness of His blessing was so immense that this human container was incapable of holding it without its over-flowing which resulted as tears. Tears of utter fulfilment which washed away the container, causing it to dissolve, for a while, into the Reality He symbolizes."

* * *

Exactly two years later, Her Majesty the Queen-Mother and Princess Irene came again to meet His Holiness — this time Her Majesty's niece and nephew also came with them : Princess Dorothea and Prince Karl. The interviews with His Holiness took place at Masulipatnam on the 6th, 7th, and 8th of December, 1968. In all, the Royal visitors spent more than eight hours with His Holiness, drinking deeply of his wisdom and experience, and basking in the full effulgence of his spiritual magnificence. From the moment of their arrival in Madras on the 3rd, to that of their departure from Madras, after the Masulipatnam visit, on the 11th for Bombay *en route* to Europe, they had but one thought — the thought about His Holiness. Each of them considered the meeting with him the most precious gift of Providence in their lives. They received the benign grace of the Great Master in an abundant measure.

The Royal visitors had meetings with the Master both severally and together. It was a remarkable experi-

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ence to watch, on the one hand, the visiting guests addressing His Holiness questions that revealed great depth of sincerity and keenness of spiritual seeking and, on the other hand, the Master giving precise instructions and most lucid expositions on points which would help in the progress of one's inward quest. The outer world rarely figured in the conversations. The inward life was what the Royalty was primarily concerned with; and they were convinced that they had come to the most authentic source for light and guidance.

To those members of the Royal party who had lately begun the practice of meditation, His Holiness gave detailed instruction as to the technique that they could adopt. Each session of meditation could be divided into two halves roughly. During the first half, controlled breathing could be practised. After taking in a deep breath, the breath is to be retained as long as it is possible to do it conveniently and without strain. If, for instance, one could retain the breath for an optimum measure of 100 seconds, let one practise the breath-retention only for 50 seconds. After the retention, one should breathe out as slowly as possoble. This is to be repeated during the first half of the meditation-session. Each time the breath is retained, one could devote the first few moments to the thought of the all-pervading Divinity which is the ground of the universe and of one's being. The advice was also given to increase slightly the daily meditation period. If, for instance, one devoted two half-hour sessions to meditation, one in the morning and one in the evening, one could add a third session of sometime lasting for a quarter-hour.

The Master enquired of Princess Irene about the progress she had made in her spiritual life. She said she had found in the practice of music a means for divine communion, and asked if she could pursue this particular mode of approach. His Holiness gave her instructions as to how through devotion to music she could develop the consciousness of the inner Spirit. Devotion to music and meditation could go hand in hand and help each other.

Her Majesty Queen Frederika asked about certain supernormal manifestations that appear while one progresses in the path of meditation. His Holiness said that one should not attach much importance to them; that one should not forget the goal of meditation which is enlightement.

A question was put in regard to what one should do for retaining the higher consciousness in the last moments of one's life. After recalling a few instances of persons who were in full possession of their faculties and passed away in peace, His Holiness observed that what really mattered was not how one passed away, but how one lived in the present. One should endeavour to lead the life divine as much as possible, without worrying about one's possible condition in the last moments. If, besides practising meditation, etc., during one's life which should be sufficient, one also wishes for a peaceful end in complete possession of one's faculties, one should cultivate *praanayaama*

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and other techniques of *Yoga*. But this is not necessary after all, and does not contribute much to one's spiritual life.

Her Majesty the Queen-Mother said : "Some of us who have adopted vegetarian food habits are asked by friends in the West to state the reason for such adoption. If we give the reason as the desire to avoid causing pain to animal life, they ask if vegetarianism does not involve inflicting pain in the vegetable world." His Holiness explained clearly and in detail the basis of vegetarianism : "The ideal life of complete compassion and non-violence is possible only for a few; it would involve subsistence on fruits and leaves that fall from trees and plants. In the case of others there can only be gradual approach towards that ideal. The rule is : if it is possible to live by causing less injury to other lives, it is wrong to inflict more violence. It is on this principle that vegetarian diet is greatly to be preferred to meat-eating. In the first place, when vegetables are plucked, the plants are not destroyed, whereas meat cannot be had without killing the animal to which it belongs. Secondly, animals are more sensitive than plants; they have a greater number of keener Sense faculties than the latter. In fact, there is not much difference in this regard between the animals and us, humans. The feeling of pain is almost the same; the suffering is of the same degree. The plants do not suffer to the same extent. Plucking vegetables or leaves is comparable to the clipping of nails and the cutting of hair. Thirdly, intrinsically there is not much to choose between cannibalism and eating of animal-meat. The arguments against the one hold good equally against the other. If the civilized people who are meat-eaters are against cannibalism, it is more on grounds of sentiment. It is clear that meat-eating causes more suffering than living on vegetables. And, every effort for reducing the quantum of suffering is commendable."

The doubt was expressed by one of the members of the Royal party, whether humanity had not missed the chance of turning to spiritual values at the end of the last World War. His Holiness replied saying that no such generalized statement could be made about mankind as a whole. What is important is that individuals should be intent on inward progress. If they evolve spiritually, the world will improve. It is not to become great that one should aim at, but to become good; for, to be good is to be truly great.

Prior to leaving Masulipatnam on the 8th of December, 1968, Her Majesty and party took leave of His Holiness after about an hour of sitting in his benign presence. Little was spoken during this session. In his own characteristic manner, the Great Master blessed the Royal devotees; and they dragged themselves away, unwillingly to leave. The spirit of humility and ardent quest for the highest values was reflected in the reply that Her Majesty gave to the chairman of the Municipal Council of Masulipatnam who met her in the special railway coach and entreated her to agree to a civic reception : "Thank you; but we have come all the way from Europe, not as members of Royalty but as humble devotees seeking the blessing and guidance of His Holiness."

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KANAKABHISHEKA TO SAGE OF KANCHI

A. KUPPUSWAMI

DIFFERENT KINDS OF **abhisheka** have been in vogue in our country. **Kumbhabhishekam** (consecration with holy water) of renovated or newly-constructed temples is of one kind. Pattabhisheka or coronation of kings and queens, newly-installed has been in practice all over the world, for millions of years. Even in the case of mere new titular monarchs of countries (of the present times), coronation is being done. Historical and epigraphic information speaks of **'Yuvaraja Pattabhisheka'**, which signifies the ordaining of a prince as a successor-ruler of a State. Striking instances can be had in the ordaining of Prince Rajadhiraja Chola by his father, Rajendra Chola-I, in 1018 A.D. and the issueless Raja Raja Chola-II crowning Rajadhiraja, the grandson of Vikrama Chola (by one of his daughters), as heir to the throne in 1166 A.D.

Some Notable Instances

Kanakabhisheka signifies the showering of flowers made of gold or gold coins as a mode of honouring a distinguished person. This is performed by rulers to honour erudite scholars and by disciples intending to honour their preceptors. Literary and epigraphical sources of information point to the **Kanakabhisheka** performed to the polymath, Appayya Deekshita (1520 to 1572 A.D.), by Chinnabomma Nayaka, the Nayak chieftain, who held sway over the present day North Arcot District of Tamil Nadu and some adjacent areas, with his headquarters at Vellore, in appreciation of Deekshita's production of a commentary, known as **Sivankamani-deepika** on **Srikantha Bhasya**. Raghunatha Nayak, the last of the well-known Nayak rulers of Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu), was a versatile scholar in Sanskrit and Telugu. Among his many works, **Parijatapaharanam, Gajendramoksha** and **Nalacaritam** are outstanding. One day, King Achyutaraya (father of Raghunatha) saw his son busy, writing something on palm leaves. Achyuta asked Raghunatha "Have you not finished

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Nalacarita? What are you writing now?" Prince Achyuta replied "This is another work". The father asked Raghunatha as to how many months it would take for its being completed. Quickly replied Raghunatha, "A day or two". The next day Raghunatha paid obeisance to his father and placed the completed script of **Achyutarayendraabhyudayam** — a biography of his father. Achyuta was elated at his son's performance — a pretty long biography in verses — and performed Kanakabhisheka by pouring gold coins on Raghunatha's head. This happened early in the latter half of the 17th century.

* * *

Records of the Thanjavur palace (in Marathi language), written in Modi script, and found kept in bundles in the Saraswati Mahal Library at Thanjavur, show that two of the rulers of the Maharatta principality of Thanjavur, have performed **Kanakabhisheka**, in the 19th century of their Gurus. In 1801, Raja Serfoji-II performed **Kanakabhisheka** to the preceptor of his royal household Sri Mahadevendra Saraswati, the 63rd Acharya of the Kanchi Matha, who was then staying at the branch Math at Kumbakonam. The value of this Kanakabhisheka made with 500 chakras (gold coins) — has been calculated (as in 1987) by Sri V. Mahadevan (in his booklet, in Tamil, on "Kanakabhishekams to the Acharyas of the Kanchi Math") as 1.5 lakhs of Rupees.

Raja Shivaji, the last of the Mahrata rulers of Thanjavur, performed **Kanakabhisheka** of the 64th Acharya of the Kanchi Sankara Math, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swami V, thrice — first in 1838 at Kumbakonam, the second in 1842, and the third at the Thanjavur palace almost unexpectedly in 1848. Sri Sudarsana Mahadevendra, the next Acharya, was honoured by the same Shivaji Raja with Kanakabhishekam in 1850.

Ramachandra Tondaiman, the ruler of Pudukkottai State (1839-1886) performed Kanakabhisheka to this 65th Acharya when His Holiness had camped in Pudukkottai.

In 1957, some leading devotees of the Math felt a keen desire to perform **Kanakabhisheka** to the Great Acharya, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Acharya's ascension to the Peetha. The Acharya did not like it and he asked the devotees to perform the **abhisheka** to the Adi Sankara Murthy at the Sri Kamakshi Temple at Kanchi. Later, owing to the pressure of devotees, His Holiness complied with the prayer. This Kanakabhisheka was performed in Little Kancheepuram.

His Holiness delivered a long speech on the occasion (6th September 1957), in Tamil. A translation of a small portion of that speech will be found interesting as it reveals the

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reason for the Acharya's compliance with the request of ardent devotees.

"Some months ago, a devotee, eighty years old, prayed to me thus: "Because of the grace of Devi Kamakshi, there occurred a rain of gold in the famine-struck Tondaimandalam (neck region of Tamil Nadu): because of the grace of Adi Sankara, gold amalakas rained in the house of a poor woman, living in Kerala. Kanchi has been blessed by the grace of both Shri Kamakshi and Acharya Sankara. It is my desire to see that **Kanakabhisheka** is done to Your Holiness, during my lifetime". At that time, his vision had deteriorated. I told him, 'You have lost the power of seeing; what can you see now?' and dismissed him. Later, he regained eyesight because of treatment by doctors. He came to me again and said 'By your grace. I am able to see everything now. Pray, grant my long-felt request'. Because of his age and his keen desire, though I am not fit in any way for this honour, I consented. But, I feel that our living in this sacred city of Kanchi and our worshipping of Sri Kamakshi and Sri Adi Sankara constitute a great Kanakabhisheka for us".

Another Kanakabhisheka was performed to the Sage Acharya of Kanchi on the 11th April 1965, by Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal at the Sanskrit College, Mylapore, Madras, at the request of devotees. The entire proceeds of that Kanakabhisheka were utilised for the renovation expenses of the Kamakshi Temple at Kanchi.

The Kanakabhishekam was performed to **H.H. Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swami,** in connection with His Hundredth Jayanthi, on **Wednesday, the 26th of May 1993,** at the Sankaracharya Math at Kanchi. ●

"There was a palmyrah tree in a grove. A **Gnankodi** (a kind of strong creeper) grew up all round the body of the tree in the course of months. One day, the creeper said 'This palmyrah tree has not grown even an inch all these months' and laughed. The tree told the creeper 'From my birth, I have, till now, seen ten thousand creepers encircling me; you are the ten thousand and one. Everyone of the earlier creepers used to remark like you. I could not give them any reason'. Though the different sections of our society have different respective Dharmas (religious duties), the fruits accruing from the performance of the specified duties are but equal in the case of each. Hence, adherence to the Dharma prescribed for him is quite necessary in the case of everyone professing our faith".

Sri Chandrasekharenda Saraswati

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THE PARAMACHARYA

PROF. S. RAMASWAMI

IT IS DIFFICULT to speak with due emotional restraint about the sage of Kanchi, since one's feelings about this unique figure of our time resist any attempt at disciplining them. One is overwhelmed by the thought that one has known a Being nearly like God Almighty Himself, whose compassion and concern for all living things are most like God's own! One can hardly think of Him without a feeling of deepest joy that one has known him in flesh, moving around in one's own world with a look of unearthly kindness and grace, blessing you all the time with His thoughts, words and deeds. He is like no other being one has seen in the flesh. The Brahma, the Upanishads speak of, and the Paramacharya seen are identical. He is embodied *satchidanand*. How fortunate we of these times are to have had him in our midst, to have spoken to him, to have been spoken unto by him. This is a blessing beyond all human estimate. For though all of us strive and struggle hard to live up to his considered advice and counsel to live simply and think on a plane of high ideals and values, no human being can reach the peaks of his perfection. But the ideals and values are there, constantly, unremittingly beckoning to us reaching down to the very depths of our being. We struggle all the while to transform our weak selves, to strengthen our always fragile resolution, to toughen our being against mischief and temptation. How few are the occasions when our better selves— and thank God, everyone agrees that one has a better self, assert themselves! If even they succeed, it is because the Sage of Kanchi is tirelessly at work, coaxing us, cajoling us, exhorting us to become our real selves. *Utthishta, Jagrata*, says the Sage of Kanchi. And in some small way, almost unknown to ourselves, we seem to be growing more and more towards moral excellence in our daily lives.

Take his exhortation to us to lead lives of austere simplicity, of near ascetic freedom from show. He bade us to do this voluntarily by our

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own strenuous exertions to promote our moral growth. We pretended to listen but did little. The world around us has created unmitigable compulsions. Today we face shortages, high prices, total lack of water for drinking, with a sense of horror over the failure of the governments to prevent these problems from arising at all. But if we had listened to the Sage, we could have imposed the needed discipline on ourselves and accustomed ourselves to it on our own. The *Duhkha* is the direct and predictable result of *thrishna*. There would have been neither of them if we had only listened to the Sage. Long ago, the Sage warned us against the mistake of multiplication of wants for progress. Quality of life, he said, is the true measure of growth in the standard of living. To live in terms of striving for satisfaction of our physical wants is to live on the level of mere animals, to dehumanise and despiritualise ourselves. All the talk of planning for prosperity, he bade us distrust, because he knew that true growth is growth of the self, growth of spiritual awareness. He pleaded for a true *swarajyasiddhi* which would make all of us independent of a deceptive, dubious environment which would throw all kinds of temptations in our path.

He bade us give up a false notion of married happiness. The marriage ceremony still current, though in a truncated form, makes the groom assure his bride *samrajni bhava* (Be my Queen). This exhortation has nothing to do with women's lib or the false or fallacious talk of domination of one sex over the other. A queen reigns in the heart of the groom. When she does so, will she need or care for aught else? The Sage said, "Don't make your bride's parents bankrupt, so that you may boast to your friends the cost of your marriage and unconscionable expensiveness of the celebrations. The current position is an exercise, a distressing exercise, in desacramentating one of the most important stages in a human being's life. What is the best ornament of the *patni? Patibhakti*, loving regard for her husband. What is the role of the *patni?* She is a *dharmapatni*, one whose service is indispensable to the correct and true practice of Dharma. *Vara dakshina, vara sulka*, 'reception etc., are a shameful exercise in vulgarity and commercialisation of a sacred rite. What were the treasure, that Sita, the ideal wife and woman received in the forest from Atri's Patni, Anasuya the saintly woman? Not pearl necklaces, diamond tiaras, diamond bracelets — surely none of these. But those ornaments which promoted *saumangalyatva, pativratya*. True, Sita told Anasuya of her father Janaka's anxieties about getting her properly married and the humiliations and privations he might have to face. But what did Anasuya say to Sita? "Child, you have shown true womanly

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honour and courage in accompanying your husband to the forest, when he had been intrigued out of the throne of Ayodhya". The Sage's ideal is, doubtless, a high and noble one. But are we being fair to the Sage in making a contemptible show, an almost despicable show, of our paltry physical wealth? These demonstrations at the time of a wedding are a defiance of Kanchi Paramacharya's sagest counsel.

He bids us give up coffee. How many of us, claiming to be his devotees, have not clung, like a slave to his chains, to the coffee habit? But the wholesomeness of the advice is patent. To be a slave of some habit-forming item — like coffee, cigarettes, alcoholic drinks — to make an irretrievable voluntary surrender of our moral and spiritual freedom, to throw ourselves at the feet of a monster of madness, only to be crushed mercilessly by this monster and to be dehumanised. We need to remember always that there is in our innermost being an *Antaryamin* whose counsel and guidance we, in our childishness, ignore, if not despise. This spirit in man is what gives dignity and meaning to our lives. The voiceless promptings of this inner man seek always to guide, counsel and if need be, warn us for our waywardness and the need to pause and retrace our steps when we tend to stray away from the path of the immemorial values that give life its real significance, harmony and beauty.

It is not suggested that it is easy to live upto the Acharya's teachings and guidance. He is a spiritual lighthouse and a powerhouse generating spiritual power and radiating light across the pathways we tread. He is not obscurantist, as some high-placed, self-styled progressives have called him in the childish innocence of their self-delusion. On the contrary, he is far ahead of us though in anguished concern for our tendency toward wayward and even disastrously self-destructive courses of conduct. Is it obscurantism to proclaim and to be Brahman? That great *upadesamahavakya* THAT THOU ART (*Tat twam asi*) is not just verbiage but the goal that beckons to us. The great Ramana of Arunachala — who, by the way, was made known to the world by our Paramacharya, said — "Be as yourselves" - not our lower, corrupt and corrupting mean selves but as the Supreme Self, we really are, though through our Avidya we seem not to know this.

The Acharya has, right before our very eyes, entered on the hundredth year of his glorious spiritual ministry, still, as ever radiating spiritual light ineffable.

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THE JAGAT GURU

K.S. VENKATARAMANI

[K.S. Venkataramani was a patriot and renowned essayist, novelist and short-story writer. He was associated with Triveni almost from the beginning and it had the privilege of publishing quite a number of his short-stories. He was a devotee of His Holiness the Paramacharya of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham. He won the admiration and blessings of the Mahaswami in a great measure. —Editors]

OUR ADI JAGAT GURU, or our first World Teacher, is the great San kara. He was the Saviour of Hinduism at a critical moment of religious unrest, and its most virile and combative exponent. We reckon him an *avatar*, with an exceedingly intellectual and practical mission in an age of all-round decadence. He is our greatest thinker. His memory is more sacred to us than the Ganges and the Cauvery, or even the sages who laid the foundations of the Hindu polity. Great in the achievements of his own life, he is still greater in the legacy of thought and institutions he founded for world service and knowledge. So grateful is the memory of man for his remarkable deeds, that to this day, even after so many centuries, his institutions flourish in their popular religious appeal. They are the seats of culture and philosophy. They are the centres of conservative yet enlightened Hinduism.

At any rate such is the *Kamakoti Peetam*, nestling on the Cauvery, which has nourished in its deltaic bosom five dynasties of kings from the third century B.C. It is now located at Kumbaconam, the centre of Tamil culture and refinement. The great Sankara originally founded the *Kamakoti Peetam* at Conjeevaram, the noblest of ancient cities, where it prospered down to the seventeenth for over a thousand years. But in the early days of the East India Company and the unsettled times of the Moguls and the Mahrattas, Conjeevaram was the storm centre of the Carnatic wars. Then the *Kamakoti Peetam* was changed forever from Conjeevaram to Kumbaconam at the invitation of the Tanjore kings. Ever since, it has thriven well indeed in the peaceful, agricultural home of the Cauvery Delta.

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The Kamakoti Peetam means "the Throne of the End of Desires". It is the symbol in union of work, love and knowledge—enjoyed, assimilated and gained as an enduring vision of life. It vindicates strenuous, selfless action in daily life. It seeks emanicipation only through knowledge which comes of impersonal experience and desireless action according to the rules of *Dharma*. Desire is the fuel that feeds the fires of the body. The *Kamakoti Peetam* strives to end all desires, keeping action at the same time in its original strength and purity. Nay, it strives to end the body itself that imprisons the soul in an endless cycle of births and deaths.

The *Kamakoti Peetam* is the most comprehensive definition of the mind and mood of man. It takes in the Heaven and the Earth in one view. It bridges the void. It names and guides all the impulses of creation. It is a full-blooded gospel. It resolves into harmony the contradictions of life. It converges into the white ray of light the myriad hues of the world. It is the seat of knowledge, abstract and concrete. It visualises every dream and every hope, and renders it in life and action. Its mind is universal. On the wings of a sublime philosophy of work, work unburdened with the desire to enjoy the fruits of action, it seeks to carry you to heights from where you can catch a glimpse of the true *Atman*.

The *Kamakoti Peetam* is a rare place on earth. Every inheritor of its proud name for over sixty generations has, for each generation, been the living symbol and exponent of a great and moving Faith. Strong and strenuous in the day's work, simple in habits of life, high in culture and fervid in temper, calm and impersonal in action and pure in personal life, they have preserved the tradition, the record and the glory of the *Kamakoti Peetam*.

Such is the inheritance to which he may be called who is by birth a Brahmana. And only a Brahmacharya, yet in the liquid glow and plastic mould of pure youth, is eligible for ascension to the *Kamakoti Peetam*. The moment he is nominated and ordained by his predecessor-in-office, usually in his last dying moments, he becomes the Acharyaswami, or the Jagat Guru, to whom all Hindus render homage more royal than the allegiance they owe to their sovereign.

The first five years after ascension are usually allotted for the training and education of the young Acharyaswami. It is a period of study and meditation in an inspiring environment, and he is aided in the task by some of the best Sanscrit pundits of Southern India and the blessings of *Kamakshi*. The qualities of the world teacher are naturally developed in the isolation of his exalted office and the daily worship of *Chandramouliswar*.

Worship releases the noblest energy. Work in worship sublimes man like celestial fire. No wonder my Acharyaswami easily becomes the centre of learning and the final arbiter of the first problems of life. He lives the life that he preaches. Words and deeds gain in him the crowning unity that is *Advaita*. The personal life of Acharyaswami is one of the plainest

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living and the highest thinking. He is the hardest of all the workers during the hours of the day. Early in the morning he bathes in flowing water. Then the prescribed ceremonies and the meditations occupy more than three hours of the busy and solemn forenoon. Then he bathes again and begins the worship on *puja* of Chandramouliswar, the radiant pebble Lingam, anointed and dedicated by the great Sankara himself as the secret and the inspiration of the *Kamakoti Peetam*. So the *puja of* Chandramouliswar is the very soul of the *peetam*. The devotional mind of man these thousand years and more has gathered and poured without stint or economy at the feet of the radiant pebble Lingam, herbs and flowers, milk and honey, and every rare and precious spice in the world. It is sacrifice at the highest. Because, it is motiveless; it is impersonal; it is absolute.

The *puja* takes more than two hours, and is performed to the sound of music, before a large concourse of devotees who wait for the spoonful of *abhishekam* water that has dripped over Chandramouliswar, which incidentally enfranchises anyone for a hearty dinner at the expense of the Jagat Guru.

The sun has already declined in the west, and my Acharyaswami retires for his single meal a day, which is itself considered a 'limb' of the *puja* of God Chandramouliswar. After dinner he again sets to work. The afternoon is taken up with disquisitions and the reception of visitors, learned and rich, from distant parts. And what a thronging variety from fascinating excellence to madding boredom ! And what a child-like laugh greeting all alike !

My Acharyaswami is royal and urbane, dignified and courteous. Sits lofty the spiritual eminence of Sankara on his brow. Lambent beams the light of cosmic intelligence on his face. He is full of knowledge. Such is the acquisitive power of the meditative mind, he knows everything—from the imperial craft of British statesmanship to the travail agonies of Soviet Russia, from the scientific method of agriculture in modern Japan to the most trivial sartorial fashions of the day at Paris.

My Acharyaswami is always open and ready for philosophical discussion, and commands the speech of classic Sanskrit with ease and terseness. The afternoon is one intellectual combat with every variety of men, from the graduate fresh and raw from the university to the orthodox pundit with his camel load of learning. He goes through the task, unwearied by ignorance and undismayed by talent, stating and restating the grand concept of the Oneness of Life and the goal of humanity : the infinite bliss of self-realisation. The conference goes on animated and lively, till the evening calls my Acharyaswami to the strength and calm of prayers and meditations, which take well-nigh over two hours. Then he retires, composed and free, after a cup of milk and a few fruits, if necessary.

But my Acharyaswami is at his very best while he journeys administering spiritual solace to the country

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people. Whenever he feels a call to go out to stir the religious consciousness and advance the power and blessing of the *peetam*, he moves out in his antique palanquin in utter stateliness and pomp, acompanied by horses, camels and elephants, trumpets and fanfares, and a large concourse of people with shops, sweetmeats and sundries. His Holiness is then a moving city and the talk and sight of the neighbourhood. He visits every sacred place and temple, and bathes in all the holy waters of the village. He evokes the religious zeal of the people, and everyone dressed in flawless Aryan style, is in full evidence around. At the bidding of my Acharyaswami, the miser willingly parts with his gold and voluntarily restrains himself for a day from the call of pleasure. His Holiness uses a share of the collections to improve the village tank and the temple. Then rural life is inspired with a true co-operative spirit.

The visit of my Acharyaswami is a godly event for every Indian village. It spells prosperity, at least for a quinquennium. Everyone does his best to make the short stay of His Holiness a success. Everything else is forgotten. All activities, even agricultural, are suspended; and the whole village, men and women and children, are literally at his feet. All pay their tribute in coin and kind as they can afford. But there is a standard minimum. The recognised *pathakanikkai* (tribute at the feet) is one hundred and eight coins, gold or silver. For one hundred and eight is a weird number in Hindu rituals. It has a mysterious sanction and power. From the chanting of the *gayatri* to the entertainment of the Acharyaswami, one hundred and eight is our standard number. There is yet a supernumber — one thousand and eight. Its efficacy is naturally even greater. Therefore the tribute of a rich man is one thousand and eight, which my Swami collects and spends promptly on religious and Sanskrit education.

My Acharyaswami belongs to the most ancient and selfless order of monks in the world. He is the holiest of Brahmanas, but transcends the distinctions of caste and creed. The poor and the panchama are as dear to his heart for social and spiritual reclamation. His temper and outlook are most democratic, though the ritual would seem exclusive. He is the rallying-point of Hinduism and the undying hope of its strength and purity in our darkest hour of need.

Wherever my Acharyaswami is, men, women and children gather round him with home-feeling and adoration, and each sits with patience and watches with eager eye for his or her turn of the spoonful of *abhishekam* water that has dripped over God Chandramouliswar, to cure all ills of body and soul.

Wherever my Acharyaswami is, there you find burning steady and pure, the lamp of life and knowledge. He has surrendered everything at a tender age, youth, wealth and all the civic pleasures, for the service of man and the continuance of a mission. He is dear to us, even as the rolling sea is to the land-soiled air. Passionate and deep-rooted is our attachment to Sankara. He is our greatest birth and our Adi Jagat Guru. ●

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MY EXPERIENCES WITH THE MAHASWAMI

V. SUBRAHMANYAM

I CAME TO KNOW about the greatness of His Holiness the Paramacharya Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamiji through Mr. Neelamraju Venkata Seshayya, formerly editor *Andhra Prabha* and Mr. Kalluri Veerabhadra Sastri, my close relative, though I heard earlier the name of Kanchi Peetadhipati.

I have been suffering from night blindness and Retinitis Pignemposa for the last 25 years. In November 1988 one day at night I became suddenly blind, though I was writing letters continuously for two hours before becoming totally blind. I did not tell my family members, since they would be afraid of this sudden development. After completing my morning routine, I went to the eye specialist Dr. V. Srinivas (Machilipatnam), who had been treating me for the last ten years. He was surprised to hear about my becoming blind suddenly on the previous night. He tested my eyes, prescribed some medicines and expressed his opinion that I became blind on account of my high blood pressure.

With a firm determination I thought of having Darshan of Lord Venkateswara and the Paramacharya. With the help of the Municipal Commissioner at Tirupati, myself and my wife had the Darshan of the Lord and left for Kanchipuram on the next day.

After reaching the place in the afternoon, we went to the Math to seek the blessings of the Paramacharya. Amidst tears my wife explained to him about my blindness. He asked me why I did not take treatment or undergo an operation for my complaint. I told him that I wanted to regain my eye sight by the grace of God and the Swamiji's blessings. The Paramacharya asked me to look at him and find out whether I was able to see. After repeated questioning by Swamiji, I could see the glittering face of Swamiji with his shining eyes and saffron robes. Swamiji asked me and

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my wife to sit on the floor. After some time he presented a saree with blouse and a Dhoti to both of us with some Kumkum sprinkled on them. I informed Swamiji that I was chanting Gayatri and Ghruni Surya Mantram which were suggested by Swamiji about 3 years back. With a view to testing me he asked me to repeat the Ghurni Surya Mantram which I was reciting 108 times daily along with Gayatri Mantram.

From there we went to Sri Sankara Vijayendra Swamiji and informed him about the Darshan and the blessings we had received from the Senior Swamiji. To our surprise I could not see the Junior Swamiji, though a torchlight was focussed by his attendants on his face. The Junior Swamiji advised us to perform Puja in Kamakshi Devi temple and come to him next morning. At that time I informed the Junior Swamiji that the wearing of Rudrakshamala would reduce blood pressure. Then Swamiji sent one of his attendants and blessed me with the Rudrakshamala and asked me to wear it. Next morning after performing Puja in Kamakshi Devi temple, myself and my wife went to the Junior Swamiji. He blessed us with Kumkum and gave printed Slokas written by the Senior Swamiji and asked my wife to read them daily.

Once an aged lady went from a long distance to have Darshan of the Paramacharya and receive his blessings, Teertham and Prasadam. She had the pleasure of having Darshan of Swamiji and witnessing the morning rituals. Swamiji stretched his hand to give Teertham to the lady but suddenly he stopped giving Teertham. He directed his attendants to ask the lady to go back to her native place immediately. He also told them to give money if necessary for her journey. She could not get Teertham from Swamiji in spite of her repeated requests. The disappointed woman went back to her native place and to her surprise found that her husband died at the same time, when the Swamiji refused to give her Teertham.

During my 30 years contact with Kanchi Peetham I was very fortunate in receiving blessings for every function in my house. I am lucky to receive clothes from the Senior Swamiji and Rudrakshamalas from Jagadguru Jayendrasaraswati Swamiji and Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswati Swamiji.

"Desire is the cause of all the troubles of living beings. Though desire will not get permanently suppressed, continuous efforts should be made to supress it. If once we get rid of this desire, by hook or crook, we will be like kings, not temporal kings with all sorts of worries - but as kings with the royal status of eternal peace."

Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati

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WHAT LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME

THE PARAMACHARYA OF KANCHI

THE FIRST TWO experiences remembered as having occurred in the third or fourth year of my life, are dreadful to think, as they were interwoven with temptation, greed, avarice, deceit, groaning, loss, lamentation and the like.

A *'mara naai'* as they call it in Tamil or teddy cat (an animal which generally climbs on trees and destroys the fruits during nights) somehow got into a room in the house and thrust its head into a small copper pot containing jaggery. The animal was not able to pull out its head and was running here and there in the room all through the night.

People in the house and neighbours were aroused by the noise and thought that some thief was at his job. But, the incessant noise continued even till morning hours, and some bravados armed with sticks opened the door of the room and found the greedy animal. It was roped and tied to a pillar. Some experienced men were brought and after being engaged in a tug-of-war, they ultimately succeeded in moving the vessel from the head of the animal. The animal was struggling for life. It was at last taken to some spot and set free, I presume. The first experience of my life was this dreadful demonstration born of greed causing all our neighbours to spend an anxious and sleepless night.

The next experience relates to a man in the street who entered the house seeing me alone with tiny golden bangles upon which he began to lay his hands. I asked him to tighten the hooks of the bangles which had become loose and gave a peremptory and authoritative direction to him to bring them back repaired without delay. The man took my orders most obediently and took leave of me with the golden booty. In glee of having arranged for repairs to my ornament, I speeded to inform my people inside of the arrangement made by me with the man in the street who gave his name as Ponnusami. The people inside hurried to the street to find out the culprit. But the booty had become his property true to his assumed name, Ponnusami (master of gold).

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These two experiences at a tender innocent age are recurring successively in some form or other even at this tottering age, nearing seventy, of being liable to be duped or eager to get by some short cut some material gain.

In attempting to judge the objective world with this rod of selfishness and superficiality of mine which has rightly earned for me the reputation of being a clever Swami, I am prone to come to the conclusion that there lives none without predominantly selfish motives.

But with years rolling on, an impression, that too a superficial one true to my nature, is dawning upon me that there breathe on this globe some souls firmly rooted in morals and ethics who live exclusively for others voluntarily forsaking not only their material gains and comforts but also their own *sadhana* towards their spiritual improvements.

A New Turn

In the beginning of the year 1907, when I was studying in a Christian Mission School at Tindivanam, a town in the South Arcot district, I heard one day that Sankaracharya of Kamakoti Peetha who was amidst us in our town in the previous year, attained Siddhi at Kalavai, a village about 10 miles from Arcot and 25 miles from Kanchipuram. Information was received that a maternal cousin of mine who after some study in Rigveda had joined the camp of the Acharya offering his services to him, was installed on the Peetha.

He was the only son of the widowed and destitute sister of my mother and there was not a soul in the camp to console her. At this juncture, my father who was a supervisor of schools in the Tindivanam Taluk, planned to proceed with his family to Kalavai, some 60 miles from Tindivanam in his own touring bullock cart. But on account of an educational conference at Trichinopoly, he cancelled the programme.

My mother with myself and other children started for Kalavai to console her sister on her son assuming the Sannyasa Asrama. We travelled by rail to Kanchipuram, and halted at the Sankaracharya Mutt there. I had my ablutions at the Kumara Koshta Tirtha. A carriage of the Mutt had come there from Kalavai with persons to buy articles for the Maha Pooja on the 10th day after the passing away of the late Acharya Paramaguru. But one of them, a hereditary maistry of the Mutt, asked me to accompany him. A separate cart was engaged for the rest of the family to follow me.

During our journey, the maistry hinted to me that I might not return home and that the rest of my life might have to be spent in the Mutt itself. At first I thought that my elder cousin having become the Head of the Mutt, it might have been his wish that I was to live with him. I was then only 13 years of age and so I wondered as to what use I might be to him in the institution.

But the maistry gradually began to clarify as miles rolled on, that the Acharya, my cousin in the Poorvashram, had fever which developed into delirium and that was why I was being separated from the family to be quickly taken to Kalavai. He told me

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that he was commissioned to go to Tindivanam itself and fetch me, but he was able to meet me at Kanchipuram itself. I was stunned by this unexpected turn of events; I lay in a kneeling posture in the cart itself shocked as I was, repeating *Rama Rama*, the only spiritual prayer I knew, during the rest of the journey. My mother and the other children came some time later only to find that instead of her mission of consoling her sister, she herself was placed, in the state of having to be consoled by someone else.

My robes of Sannyasa were not the result of any renunciation on my part, nor had I the advantage of living under a Guru for any length of time. I was surrounded from the very first day of Sannyasa by all the comforts and responsibilities of a gorgeous court.

But, it so happened that Tumuluru Ramakrishnayya and Adayappalam Pasupati Iyer, both of them serving in the District Court of South Arcot and ardent disciples of my Gurus, were there in Kalavai when I took Sannyasa Asrama. Later, it became clear that they were determined to help me to mould my life in my youth.

Ramakrishnayya being worried by a lot of family burdens in spite of his detached mentality, it fell to the lot of Pasupati to shoulder the task. Pasupati devoted most of his leisure to solitary meditation and reading Vedanta Prakaranas or Treatises of Sri Shankaracharya.

Such a man, retired from Government service soon after my ascending the Gadi, lived with me always, watching my every action, speech and twinkling of the eye. He even curtailed his meditation in order to devote some time to the supervision of the secular administration of the Mutt.

He would meet me in private periodically, point out every item of weakness he had observed during the intervening period and implore me to heed to his suggestions to overcome them. When he had sometimes to be very harsh, he would tell me that for all these *aparadhas* he was committing towards one of a higher Asrama, he would make amends when I grew up as a full-fledged saint.

He used to persuade every day every friend of his to turn his mind to self-introspection and would argue with him freely as to what permanent values he had gained by being materialistic and would bluntly point out to every one of them his points of weakness and ask him to ponder whether the remedies contained in the Upanishads and Shankara's Prakaranas might not be given a trial.

He would meet even unacquainted persons in the street and enquire into their worries and woes and would succeed in transforming them into true devotees of God, true followers of Vedanta and true Sishyas of Shankara.

He lived close by me partaking in my Shankara Bhashya Patha till 1926, for a period of 18 years. He lived for my sake in Kumbakonam famous for its mosquitoes and elephantiasis and became a victim of filariasis and fever. Nevertheless, he would not leave me.

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When he was bed-ridden in his house at Cuddalore for some months, it so happened that I was received in Cuddalore in the course of my tour and when my procession was going on in the town, he patted the Mutt elephant. He breathed his last the same night.

His was a life lived with intense love for others without the least reaction of fear or favour.

When on tour in Trichinopoly District in 1923, I halted at a village when I heard a girl of about 12 admonishing her younger brother for his having uttered an untruth. Her advocacy of truth and her love for her brother which prompted her to see that he was not spoiled, far surpassed a saint's direction. I cannot forget this incident after the lapse of so many years.

When touring in Kerala, I happened to camp in a public halting place where in one room some elderly Namboodiri Brahmins were talking together. One of them opened his Puja box in order to begin his Puja but, nevertheless, took part in the gossip. After some time he realized his mistake and turned his attention to the Puja, but wound up the box and exclaimed that owing to his having taken part in the gossip, his inner efforts to secure the mental equilibrium required for God's Puja had failed and rather than making a show of Puja without inner equilibrium, he would not perform the Puja that day.

This incident which is fresh in my memory spells honesty of purpose in one's own religious pursuits.

In 1929, I met a Sannyasi in a border village of North Arcot. He knew neither Tamil nor Telugu. He knew only Marathi and Hindi. He told us that he travelled to Rameshwaram by mail and lost his *danda* during the journey. He probably fasted till the taking of a new *danda*. He was duly given a consecrated *danda*. From that time he regarded me as his Guru, because I saved his Ashrama Dharma. He was then more than 80 years old. He refused to leave me till 1954 when he attained Siddhi.

Soon after he joined us during the Chaturmasya of 1929, I was laid up with malaria fever for about 40 days. Till then none was in the habit of touching me. But then I was not able to stand or walk without help. This old man, being a Sannyasi, took upon himself the duty of helping me.

He was a very hot-tempered man. His voice was authoritative. He was a dread to all in the vicinity. He had been in the Revenue Department in the Dewas State in Central India. Neither Nanasaheb nor Jhansi Rani could compete with him in his authoritativeness.

On no day would he fail to do Puja to my feet and none could deter him from his purpose. Tears would roll down his face during this Puja.

Once in Kanchi, a relative of his, who had been on Yatra, came to me and after talking to him returned to me and took me to task. He expressed wonder how I could be so cold without the least reciprocity towards one, nearing the 100th year, who regarded me as his sole spiritual refuge high above any God. My natural superficiality did not react even to this admonition.

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Once we have been to Tirupati. The aged Swami was then in our camp. I went up the hill to worship Balaji. Just as I was returning from the temple after Balaji Darshan the aged Sannyasi who had managed to arrive at the top of the hill confronted us. The temple authorities, in deference to his old age, Ashrama and connection with our Mutt, offered to arrange for his Darshan of Balaji. He fell at my feet and exclaimed : "This is Balaji. Pardon me, I can not accept your offer". He returned without Balaji's Darshan.

I came into contact with two other persons, both of them quite in contrast with this old man. They were not acquainted with each other and were removed by 30 years of time; but they thought and acted on the same lines.

They were full of ecstasy in the adoration of my feet, absorbed in thoughts of me all day and night, which, they told me, gave them immeasurable strength to bear any calamity or temptation very lightly. But when they came to know of my shortcomings and natural unsteadiness, not only did they discontinue their worship of my feet but also did their best to prevent anyone from gaining access to my feet as they thought that adoration of my feet by devotees contributed in a degree to my limitation.

They too renounced all other responsibilities of their life and resolved to spend the rest of their life in either entreating and imploring me or being engaged in austerities and prayers for my correction.

Life has taught me only this : "God has created some souls to live for others only."

"Feeding the hungry and quenching the thirst of the thirsty have been regarded as great charitable acts by our law-grivers. Digging a tank is a great source of help for all living beings, not only for man.

Thinking that all living beings are forms of God, let us help other beings with God-given hands and legs, considering it as an offering to God".

Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi

'All of you are part of me. What I must pray to God is to bless me to develop my own internal strength. When I achieve that, you will reform yourself automatically. So when I pray for myself, I pray for you all.

Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati

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DEATH AND LIFE

PROF. KOTA S.R. SARMA

Oh, many a strange account of Life and Death!
One more. The Scene: Belated Evening Road.

And there's a seemingly silent third one too,
But like a longing, linking *'terza'* rhyme!
Invested though with rich and radiant view

In the hallowed sundown glow, as if sands of Time
Run out, they hurry (I pace — with wistful watch).
Life wears, to suit the changing moods of clime,

A light green cardigan. What a marvellous match
The pearly buttons thereof—the top six —make!
Of a slightly different shade (delightful catch!)

The seventh one hangs — a note that's out of tune.

She seems to walk — walk off her legs —untired.
What gender is Life?
'Tis feminine. *Oui, la vie* !

But, who would bother about the light details
Of Life's attire but him, who, sneaking, makes
Conceited glances at her, the robe-on-her,
To *'her'* from *'him'* — a prided birthday gift?

Well, Life is lovely, all-bewitching, sweet —
Appeased when cross, buttered and creamed when dry.
Of course, Death must be *he* — a virtuous he;
But, Saint of Assisi, how he is Sister, say!
His suit is gray, his wakeful gait is grave;
His face is long, his eyes are sleepy red;
His arm, when raised, does almost touch the seat
Of Heaven —*Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott!*

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He holds her — what an owning attitude!—,
His forearm archng round her graceful waist;
She seems to like his longing mounty palm.
She makes three floating steps to one of his,
As if she stretches her yielding self between
Repeating, rapid, silent strides of Death.

We cannot say what's pointed out to her;
She looks with widened eyes and raises them
To his speaking face, fraternity framing laud.

Truth is a follower of Life and Death. So close
A *"Supra-Conjunction"* — to 'tween apart!
And Truth is dressed in white as white can be.
Some say 'tis *'he'*, some say 'tis *'she'; 'Tu Whoo'*!
There's a feminine charm, if one may look from front
And masculine traits — studied in full *profil*.

Though Truth's a shoulder-bag, *'tis a' la main*!
Whene'er Life lifts her face to words-from-Death,
Truth slips in a silent note, in the satchel, anon!
Life must have certainly heard what Death has said
That Truth has surely caught and bagged-in all.
At times, Life's reed-like lips are seen to move;
Their partial "dialogue" fully vocalic though,
Is strangely a tottering *tutti* —clipped in the end!

Why, Death, to stifle Life that dies to live?
Is it Life that cuts out Death — "Death thou Shalt die!"
Whose is the constant dying message, 'Life, live long'?
We may not hear he-spider's strangled cry,
But surely can the mother-wasp's dying joy.

And shan't we look into the bag that Truth has filled?

I had with me my cunning camera set —
When they were standing, facing the sinking Sun,
I clicked, like a spy, and had much gooseflesh on.

In the silence of my bolted hotel room, I found
Tableaux vivants — a lot detailed, but flat
In black and white, imagining missing depth.

See! Lost Dimension, me — in dreamy depth.

TO WAKE

Two falling leaves, one after one,
Come reeling down, with equal speed;
And oh, they both, like players outrun,
Are lying silently down, indeed!

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Now, o'er them wafts what unseen Wind,
When one of 'em is raised, as if by a hand!
But the other one, still to the ground is pinned!
With wondering looks — divided — I stand!

From *"The Return of the Rambler"*

NOTES

[The poet deems it necessary to provide notes, as the poem contains quite a few foreign words and expressions which are difficult to comprehend.]

EPIGRAPH : (lines from *Studierzimmer, Goethe's* Faust, Part I).

Dear friend, all Theory is gray;
The golden Tree of Life is green (in translation)

4. *terza (rima)* : used by Dante Alighieri, in his *Commedia;* adopted here, as may be seen in the three triplets (lines 3 to 11).

12. *seventh one :* (standing for) old age; ref. to the 'seven ages of man' pictured by Shakespeare in *As You Like It.*

14. *Oui, la vie:* (Fr.) meaning "Yes, (the) Life". French Grammar, which has only two genders for classifying all nouns, has 'Life' in the feminine (*la vie*).

22. St. Francis of Assisi used the feminine form of address for "Death".

26. *Ein' ...*(Ger.) Our God is a strong Fort. This line is taken from Martin Luther's famous hymn in his *Klug'sche Gesangbuch.* (1529)

39. *Tu Whoo :* The hooting sound of the owl, as if the wise bird is trying to know the nature of Truth (the words, French and English respectively, meaning, 'who art Thou?').

42. *a la main* : (Fr.) 'in the hand'. Whereas in English we use 'in his/her hand', the French idiom omits the possessive pronoun in such places and simply says 'in the hand'. The suggestion is that Truth is impersonal.

48. *"dialogue" fully vocalic though:* This is a finding by the author; it seems that "dialogue" is the shortest word (in the English language) having all the five vowels (vocalics), namely, 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o' and 'u'. The last two vowels in the word (i.e., 'u' and 'e') are silent (though they have appeared in the course of the history of the word), as hinted by 'clipped in the end' occurring in the next line.

49. *tutti :* (Ital.) a term of Music (ety., masc. pl. of *tutto*, all), used for directing all instruments/voices be performed together. The suggestion conveyed by the phrase 'tottering tutti' is obviously the silence of Life and Death in the final stage, viz., Absolution.

51. Ref. to John Donne's famous Sonnet, *Death, Be Not Proud.*

53. 4. Ac. to the observation(s) of Zoologists, the female spider kills and devours the he-spider, as soon as the young ones are born, the male silently dies.

In the same way, the mother wasp, as soon as its young ones are born, whirls and wheels, thus making sound as if in joy for the birth of her progeny, till it becomes exhausted and dies.

60. *Tableaux vivants :* (Fr.) live pictures.

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THE INDIAN SCENE : SOME ASPECTS

MAMIDIPUDI PATTABHIRAM

[We would like to bring to the notice of our readers that Prof. M. Ven katarangaiya, the well-known educationist of revered memory, used to contribute to "Triveni" regularly for several years a feature article - "International Affairs : A Survery". The articles were unbiased and were of great academic interest. They were considered to be very valuable and were greatly appreciated by readers. He also wrote for some time "The Indian Scene" which was equally well received by our readers. We are glad to inform our readers that Sri Mamidipudi Pattabhiram, son of Prof. Ven katarangaiya, is pleased to resume the feature from this number. He is the Deputy Editor of "The Hindu", India's national newspaper. He has been working for the paper for the last 45 years — perhaps a record in Indian journalism. – Editors]

The Indian political scene in the last three months is a study in contrasts. On the one hand there is a powerful trend towards stabilisation of the Government at the Centre and on the other it presents a picture of turbulence, especially in the sensitive States of Punjab, Assam and Jammu and Kashmir. Taken as a whole the principles of democracy so vital to the country's future of secularism could be said to have triumphed. The by-elections that were held in the states have shown beyond doubt that the people's faith in the democratic structure is as strong today as it was before, notwithstanding the ugly events that had taken place following the destruction of the Babri Masjid on December 6 last. Even though the Government led by Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao has to take a part of the blame for what had happened, the faith of the minorities in the administration is still intact. And yet it should have to be noted that the forces of destruction are very much in evidence during recent weeks and it is going to be a hard task for the Government to restore complete peace in the strife-torn areas. Bombay, for instance, has had its share of violence unprecedented in the annals of the metropolis and at one time it looked as if the very foundations of orderly government are going to be shaken. Fortunately, it has been possible to locate the mischief-makers

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on time and further damage to the fabric has been averted. If politics in a democratic system is complex *per se*, it is even more so in a country like India with all its diversity. The sheer size of its population and the highly complex problems that will have to be tackled make the work of the administration extremely difficult and add to it the cult of violence that has spread in recent times the story is complete.

The main question that is being asked now is whether Jammu and Kashmir will ever again be what it was, say five years ago. There is no specific answer to this but there is no doubt that the entire country is concerned about its future. The game that Pakistan is playing in fomenting trouble is well known but the Government is not willing to take any action in the nature of a direct confrontation with the neighbouring country which may end up in a national disaster. The Centre is trying its best to convince Pakistan that it should keep its hands off Kashmir but the rulers of that country are in no mood to listen. Perhaps they are using Jammu and Kashmir to divert the minds and attention of its own people to the shortcomings on their part. But public opinion in India is very much against the policy of appeasement which is costing the nation dear. There is now a new Governor for the State and an entire set of new advisers but it has to be seen whether these changes bring about a radical transformation in the state of affairs in the State. One thing, however, is certain. The Government has made it plain that the future of Jammu and Kashmir is not negotiable. It has now to find out ways and means of initiating a political process which alone can bring the people closer to the administration.

Unfortunately all the known political parties have withdrawn from the scene in Kashmir and the Government is hard put to finding the right kind of leaders with whom it can negotiate. Possibly when once peace is fully restored - and there is no knowing how long this is going to take - politicians will re-emerge. The growth of exremist organisations in the State with direct links with Pakistan has complicated matters and it must be the effort of the Government to see that the nexus between them and the neighbouring country is broken. This is not going to be an easy task either, considering the fact that there has been tremendous infiltration from across the border and weeding out the anti-national elements from the State is going to be an extremely difficult task. But that should not deter the Government from doing the right thing. Perhaps, the Government wants to wait and see before contemplating drastic action. The visit of the Central ministers to the State to study at first hand the situation in the State is a hopeful sign and the Prime Minister is credited with the intention of establishing greater contacts with the people. The political scene is thus not very discouraging, even if it is not exactly heartening, at least so far as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned.

Punjab, however, presents altogether a different picture. The popular Government led by Mr. Beant Singh has succeeded in eliminating a large number of militants and this itself is a big achievement. The support extended to the extremists by the

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people in some parts of the State is not forthcoming, since they are convinced that they are not fighting for a cause and are only indulging in killings for personal gain. The Chief Minister has done well so far and had even succeeded in holding Panchayat elections which is a positive achievement. The Akali leaders, who in fact could have given real content to democratic institutions in the State, have not played their part. For long they were under terrorist threat that the slightest deviation from their secessionist goal would invite the ultimate punishement. The Akalis now seem to have realised that they need to distance themselves from the overground organisations of the extremists, especially because they are no more under the hold of the militants. The politics in Punjab could make a change for the better, if the Akalis entered the political arena without fear. Of course, it is not as though Punjab is totally free of militant threat. Atleast conditions are propitious for a better political activity, even though the Government has still a lot to do to pacify the anger of the Sikhs who felt alienated following the Blue Star Operation and the killings that took place after the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The scene in Punjab is really encouraging on the positive side and needs to be further toned up.

Elsewhere in the country there has been violence of sorts but that is not such as to cause too much worry. Yet another important event in the past few months has been the budget session of Parliament which has taken up several matters of public importance. Of course, the proceedings in both houses of Parliament helped to highlight an unhappy fact, namely, that the elected representatives of the Indian people think nothing of bringing work to a grinding halt thereby wasting time. But the important point that needs to be stressed is that very often it is the insensitivity of the Government that forces the Opposition to resort to these tactics. Experience in the last two decades has encouraged the notion that it is easier to be in the limelight by throwing parliamentary norms to the winds than by applying skill to debate or mastering the art of argument. Little wonder there are many who talk about the decline of Parliament. At a time when there is an all round decline in tolerance, let alone respect, for dissenting opinions whatever may be the field of national life, is there anything surprising about the sharp fall in the quality of proceedings in Parliament? That does not mean Parliament has become functionless. The impeachment proceedings against a Supreme Court Judge, Mr. V. Ramaswami, are unique and it was for the first time that this procedure has been invoked to censure a sitting judge. It is another matter that the motion fell through but it has sent the right signals. Corruption at the highest level should not be tolerated and there has been just criticism that the ruling party finally fell a victim to its own indecision. The gainer is, of course, the judge who was found to have been guilty of gross misbehaviour by a three-judge committee appointed by the Lok Sabha Speaker to look into the charges against him. But this episode reveals that the people are vigilant and will not let go an opportunity to condemn someone who has been corrupt. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty and this

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has been amply proved by the proceedings in Parliament.

If the Congress party has not come out in flying colours in this development, it is also true that it does not present a picture of cohesion. Being the ruling party at the Centre this must be a matter of some concern to the people at large. There are also disturbing reports of the goings on within the Congress (I). It would seem that the ambitious Minister for Human Resources, Mr. Arjun Singh, has chosen this time to make yet another move to embarrass the Prime Minister. His plea that the party should apologise for the Ayodhya happenings is not well-founded. If at all, it is the BJP which was in power when the masjid was destroyed that must make amends for its failure to protect the monument. Unfortunately for the Congress (I), its decision to dismiss the popular Government in Madhya Pradesh has been set aside by the High Court and this has certainly upset the calculations of the Centre. The best thing that the Centre could do now is to hold elections in the four BJP ruled States of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh without further delay. That is the only way the strength of the BJP could be assessed. The use of Article 356 to dismiss the State Governments has been long under criticism and at one time it was thought that the Presidential order dismissing the Government at the State is not subject to judicial review. This notion has been falsified and this has created new uncertainties of a political nature. How exactly the Centre is going to deal with the delicate issue arising out of the court's order on Madhya Pradesh will, of course, be watched with interest. The road ahead is long and difficult and the Prime Minister, no doubt, is better qualified than most to lead the nation out of the many crises that politicians of all parties have created.

Meanwhile the tribals in Bihar and Assam have been carrying on a political agitation and this again has to be resolved quickly before it takes an ugly shape. The Indian political scene has certain positive aspects which deserve notice as, for instance, the ushering in of the Panchayati Raj system in all its glory. Although the special session of the Congress to discuss the matter could not take place, every effort is being made to put life into the system. Of course, the success of the system depends on the extent to which organised political parties refrained from interfering with it and trying to convert it into their handmaiden and use it as a jumping ground to climb to power. There is no doubt that as consciousness grows among the people at the ground level they would be less and less liable to be moved about as pawns by political parties and ambitious politicians. For the sake of the vitality of these institutions it would be best to leave them in the direct control of the people, although the political parties might carry on educative work among the people. What should be aimed at is real devolution of power and not a make belief. ●

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MAY DAY

P.N. SAMPATH

May Day is a truly significant date
To contemplate the past, to assemble and debate,
To restructure strategy, re-define issues,
Pledge solidarity and exchange views;
The workers' lot had not improved in one jump;
It was a saga of toil, turmoil and triumph.

Now when the world is engulfed in toxic flames of hate,
Religious and ethnic strife, terrorism without abate,
While vast multitudes are tormented by privation and want
Whom endless everyday worries haunt —
Soviet Union's abandonment of the Communist creed,
Dismantling of the edifice with such devastating speed,
Like a meteor that blazes a while and is soon forgot,
The citadel of World Communism fell, eased out of the slot.

The trail-blazing October Revolution and its impact
shall nevertheless endure this human failure, this hard fact —
Comrades everywhere experienced a jolting shock;
Only a single model had failed, Marxism stands as a rock —
Karl Marx, that messiah of hope for the benighted masses
Shall continue to guide the exploited classes;
His exhortation for workers' unity over all
Shall remain the motivating clarion call —
Let May Day inspire the expansive labour folk
To help the economy to get back on the growth track,
To recapture the zest for the quest,
To register success in every struggle, every test.

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HOMAGE TO Sri M.P. PANDIT

Dr. P. R A J A

["Triveni" records with deep sorrow the passing away of Sri M.P. Pandit on March 14, 1993. He was closely associated with the journal for over three decades — to be more precise from 1960. He was a member of the Advisory Board of 'Triveni' and has reviewed numerous books on the sacred and esoteric lore which were greatly appreciated by the readers as well as the authors of the books. He was widely and deeply read and was an ardent devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Madhav Pandit joined the Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry at the age of 21 in 1939 and continued there as a true Sadhak all his life. He has authored or edited more than hundred books — notable among them were his treatises on "Savitri" and "Life Divine". His monthly Bulletin "Service Letter" which he launched about twenty years ago is a practical guide to seekers of Truth. His numerous admirers will remember him as a true Sadhak and a Sahridaya. "Triveni" pays its sincere homage to him.

— Editors]

M.P. PANDIT IS NO MORE. He passed away on Sunday, 14th March 1993, at Appollo Hospital, Madras, after a serious ailment. Twenty-four hours later, his body was cremated at the Karuvadikuppam crematorium, Pondicherry.

But is M.P. Pandit, affectionately called "Madhav" by his friends and well-wishers, and "Panditji" by his admirers and disciples, really dead? Is Death powerful enough to take him away to the nether regions, erasing him from everyone's memory? Can the mighty and dreadful Death ever feel proud of having overthrown him? Death knows for certain that any attempt to declare Panditji dead might be suicidal. Yes. He is one among the few Siddha Purushas who can boldly declare with John Donne : "And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die."

While it is true that none of us would be able to see Panditji in flesh and blood, it is not untrue to say that he would continue to live in our hearts.

What did Panditji do to hold such pride of place in the hearts of millions?

Sounds quizzical but the answer is quite simple.

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He wrote. He wrote his way into the hearts of millions round the globe. He wrote about "Life Beautiful". He told others "How did I begin" and "How did I Proceed?" and thereby paved the way for others interested in making their living on Planet Earth peaceful. In these turbulent times he fought for a World Union. He gave a clarion call to Human Unity. Through his Sat-sangs he aroused the spirit in every listener to aspire for a Life Divine. Through his 150 and odd books, written in his 75 years of sojourn on earth, he struggled not in vain to teach the perfect "Art of Living". Since he rarely preached or wrote what he didn't follow, this Universal Man, an immortal in the world of letters, is bound to live in the hearts of his readers and fans who are innumerable like the lively essays he wrote about life for several periodicals. His understanding of human relationship, of true love and life beautiful is *par excellence* and any book of his will stand ample testimony to this fact.

Once I asked him, "What can you and I do to create a completely different society?" Panditji's answer was : "The change must start with the individual and spread out to like-mindeid sections. The key is with the individual." As an individual thinker, Panditji had the key that made it possible for everyone who believed in him, to be completely at peace within oneself and in one's relationships with others.

Hailed by his disciples as "a polymath, a confluence of diverse cultures, an authentic exponent of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and a universal man," Sri Madhav Pundalik Pandit was born on June 14, 1918 in Sirsi, North Canara, in a family closely associated with great spiritual personages. When he was hardly thirteen Vashishtha Ganapati Muni, also known as Nayana, who was an associate of Ramana Maharshi of Tiruvannamalai, has sensed the spiritual light in the "nice boy" (in Mother's words). He then commended him to Sri T.V. Kapali Sastriar. Young Madhav who was keen on taking on spiritual life, gained valuable experience and training under his mentor's tutelage.

A graduate in Arts, a university rank holder in Law, Sri M.P. Pandit met the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1939 and surrendered to her only to identify himself, as she had done, with the whole of humanity.

For more than five decades Panditji delivered lectures both in India and abroad, reviewed and wrote on various topics of spiritual interest — Veda, Upanishads, Gita, Tantra, Mantra, Philosophy, Psychology, Occultism and the Integral Yoga — in both Indian and foreign periodicals, edited two quarterlies and a monthly — *World Union*, *The Advent* and the *Service Letter* — apart from sparing enough time for visitors who very reluctantly moved out of his office or residence envying the other visitor eagerly awaiting his turn to get blessed.

My acquaintance with Panditji is hardly a dozen years old. I still distinctly remember the day I met him. It was on a Sunday evening. Accompanied by one of my well-wishers and a friend of Panditji, I entered Panditji's bungalow that was already brimming with men and women, both

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old and young. Sipping at the tasty lotus juice given with kindness by the inmates of the bungalow, we sat on a mat spread on the floor of a big hall, along with others waiting to listen to a Sat-sang speech to be delivered by Panditji.

I was a bit curious, for though I had read a few of his works, and reviewed one of them, I had not met him in flesh and blood. No wonder I betrayed my anxiety to see the scholar and writer.

Panditji made his appearance and occupied his chair. While my eyes saw the scholar and writer, my soul saw the sage in him, truly a God-realised person.

Spellbound I listened to his talk on 'Mind Control'. When the talk was over, I looked at my watch. One full hour has gone by, as if in a trice; so fascinating was his talk.

When the crowd melted away, I was introduced to him.

Panditji smiled at me. "I am happy that you have come", he said holding my hand. "Please do come again when you find time."

I managed to find time, now and again, to visit him. I, for one, do not believe in going to temples. But I love to spend some time in the company of spiritual-minded men who are also pen-wielders.

I remember to have disturbed Panditji even at odd hours. He never once said to me, "I have no time for you." I doubt whether he had said so to anyone. Perhaps that is the reason why he quite often told me that a day consists of twenty-five hours.

There were times when I discussed with him not only matters of spiritual interest but also of base value like groupism and politics. He was always serious to the core about what he said and his seriousness was not without humour — even if occasionally a grim one. Well ! I was one among the privileged few to whom he spoke freely. But he shied away from giving advice to me. And this is what I liked most in him.

Just as I liked and read his writings, Panditji read and liked mine. After reading my autobiography, he began to give me more number of books, some sent for review in the journals he edited and some simply as additions to my personal library. He did so perhaps, to satisfy the bibliomaniac in me.

On one occasion, owing to overpressure of work, I met him after a big gap of six months. "Meet me at least once a month," he said in a stern voice. After a pause he added, "And whenever you do so, come with a sack."

I took it for a joke and laughed.

The next time I met him I realized how foolish I was to take his words for a joke. The helmet-box of my scooter which carries half of the grocery items every month to my six-member family got stuffed with books, all fresh from the press.

Books he had reviewed for Indian and foreign periodicals, and a section of books he had received for favour of review in the journals he edited were passed on to me. Along with books came literary and spiritual journals. Folders with sheaves of top-quality papers (on which I typewrite my poems and short stories and send by air to editors of foreign periodi-

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cals), pens of different makes and hues, carbon papers, packets of correction paper, spools of typewriter ribbon, bottles of correction fluid, all U.S.A. - or Canada-made, poured on me from his ever-giving hands.

Wherever I turn my eyes to in my study, I see books stick out their heads to say : "I am authored by M.P. Pandit." Some say "I once lived on Panditji's shelves."

The Sheaffer (12 K gold electroplated fountain-pen from U.S.A.) I use has the letters "M.P.P." engraved on its tank.

The papers on which the Sheaffer moves were given to me with love by Panditji.

To cut the matter short, Panditji played the role of a mother to me and nourished the writer in me.

Usually I met Panditji at his residence on the first Saturday of every month. And so on March 6, 1993, I pushed open the door of his bungalow. The hall clink-clanked.

"Come in, Mr. Raja ... But I am sorry you can't meet Panditji today. He is unwell," said Ms. Vasanti Rao, Panditji's assistant.

As I stood looking at her helplessly, I heard Panditji speak to her in Kannada.

"Wait ! there is something for you", she said to me and moved towards the adjacent room.

I craned my neck to have a glimpse of Panditji through the window. I could see only his back. I never in the least sensed that That was the last look I would have of him.

FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Dr. P.K. JOY

My country,
My people,
My world,
My fellow-men,
let not any evil ever
befall you.
If a human sacrifice is necessary
to avert the evils threatening you,
Here I offer myself
sacrifice me
for the common good of all
and save yourselves.

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JOURNEY FOR LIGHT

[SHORT STORY]

SHEHNAAZ KANWAL

[TRANSLATED FROM URDU BY MADAN GUPTA]

IT WAS A SUMMER afternoon. I was driving my car very fast so that I may reach home quickly. The sizzling heat of summer affects the temper also. I was therefore in a foul mood. The traffic is comparatively less in the afternoons. The road I was driving on was nearly without traffic. From the houses built one after another in a row, I could hear sound of air-conditioners and coolers. Closed windows had heavy curtains to keep away sun's blistering rays. Today was a half day. If I had returned early, I would have also been lying in comfort in my bedroom with a cooler on. But what to do? High or low. Service is after all service. The boss's orders have to be obeyed.

My thoughts received a jolt when in front of me I suddenly saw the flutter of a green saree. I pressed my brake-pedal hard. A slightly dark-complexioned girl was very near my car, smiling away even in the unbearable heat. I looked at her in surprise and rolled down the window glass. She had a very soft and innocent face. I said angrily, "You must either be having a grudge against society or are a victim of our in-laws' cruelty. Otherwise why should you have come out to commit suicide on such a hot afternoon?" She replied coolly, "I am not such a coward. Today the rickshaws have gone on a lightning strike for some reason or the other. I have been waiting here for some time. Seeing you come I tried to stop you for a lift as you looked a decent sort. But you were lost in your thoughts. I had therefore to come nearer the car to catch your eye".

I was pleased to hear her praise me. Opening the door I asked her to get in. She came and sat without a fuss, leaning towards the window. I liked her matter-of-fact behaviour. Her straightforward talk made me like her. She had dark, long hair. Her complexion was smooth and slightly dark. She had a thin and long neck, tapering fingers, a smiling face and a sweet voice. I felt less oppressed by

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the heat when I started the car. A lonely man perhaps feels the rigour of the weather more.

When the car reached near my house, I pointed towards my house and said, "I live here".

"Oh," she said and looked a little uncomfortable. Then she added, "O.K. Leave me here. I shall walk the rest of the way. I am not very far from here".

"By pointing out my house", I said, "I did not mean that the car will not go any further. The intention of showing it to you only was that in future also if you need my services you know where to come". She felt shy and smiled. I looked into her eyes and said, "I have promised to leave you home. From now on you will have to tell me the route." Then I proceeded according to her directions and stopped near her house. Getting down she pointed to a building in front and said, "Mine is flat No.8 on the second floor".

"And the name?" I asked.

"Neelima Banerjee", she said and smiled. "Why don't you come up for a while?"

"No", I said. "If I go into a house now I shall not be able to come out till tomorrow morning".

"O.K", she said. "Some other time then."

"I am called Manjeet Behl. I thought it necessary to tell her my name."

"Indeed; you cannot possibly have another name."

"And what does that mean?" I asked.

"Your name is rightly Manjeet." And smiling she proceeded towards her stairs.

I was left brooding over what she had said. When I thought of the meaning of my name "winner of a heart." I laughed loudly. "She does say beautiful things", I said to myself.

I did not feel the heat at all as I drove back. In fact I found myself humming a tune.

Then we started meeting frequently. She was a B.A. 2nd year student. Her father Sushant Banerjee was a senior officer. The family was Bengali but had been here for a long time. She talked about Bengal with great affection; almost like a mother talking about a long-lost son.

"Have you seen Bengal?" I once asked her.

"I have only been once and that too only to Calcutta. I was eight years old then. My maternal grandfather was ill. There was no opportunity to go again."

"But what they say about the magic of Bengal has a lot of truth in it," I said and looked at her teasingly.

She smiled as if she agreed with me.

"Do you remember Calcutta?" I asked.

"Yes. A little." She seemed lost in her thoughts. "I used to go for walks with my maternal grandfather in the Park Circus area. I still remember the tall buildings and the wide roads." "And 'rasgullas'?"

"Yes," She gave a hearty laugh. "When I was asked what I would like to have for breakfast, I had said

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'rasgullas'. Do you like them?" She asked all this with great friendliness.

"Very much," I said smiling. "In fact I like many Bengali things."

"For instance?"

"For instance you, you and you."

Her face had a glow and a shimmer. I could see dreams in her dreamy eyes.

"What do you like about Punjab?" I asked just like that.

"The same thing that you like about Bengal."

Her meaningful remark left no doubt that she was in love with me.

She used to readily agree with everything I said. Perhaps it was this habit of hers which impressed me most about her. Once she had said, "Manjeet, a girl respects a man who is honest and straightforward. You have both these qualities."

I knew that the lesson my elders had taught me was to be always respectful and protective towards women.

One day she was a little sad. I felt disturbed seeing her like that. "What is the matter" I asked. "Why are you so quiet?"

"Manjeet", she said in a low tone. "We are very selfish."

"How?" I asked looking carefully at her.

"Why do we divide ourselves into different regions? There is nothing wrong with loving one's motherland but is it right that it should become a reason to dislike others?"

"This is the way this mad world functions Neelima," I said trying to console her. "And it is nothing peculiar to us. It is a world-wide phenomenon. East or West, you will find it everywhere." "But why does everyone consider himself the best? I love Bengal but I consider other regions of my country also good. And this is nothing out of compulsion. Our neighbour is Jaswant auntie. She treats me like a daughter. I also love her very much. I cannot therefore understand why some people consider others inferior."

"Let's hope this will all end one day, Neelima."

"When? How?" She looked pessimistic.

"When education and advancement tell us that there is nothing more lovable than one's fellow human beings."

"I wish that would happen soon." And she placed her head on my shoulder.

"Was there any talk about me in your house?" I asked her.

"No. My father is a very simple and forward man but my mother only likes Bengalis. She is very orthodox."

When I returned home after meeting Neelima, I felt very upset. She had very diplomatically told me that I would be unacceptable to her mother as a bridegroom for her. And for the time being I had no solution for the problem. I kept awake all night. To make the elders change their mind is an impossible task. They base their arguments on their rich experience. For the younger generation emotions count a lot. Lost in

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these thoughts I saw the morning peeping into my room. That was a morning of great importance for me. In the night I had made a resolution. I had my breakfast and decided to skip office. As I lay down in bed, I fell off to sleep instantly because my mind was completely at rest.

At 5 o'clock in the evening I went to meet Neelima. She looked glum and sad even today. Without beating about the bush I said to her. "It will be weakness to deviate from the path we have chosen for ourselves, Neelima. Therefore I have thought of a way out."

"What is it?" she asked eagerly.

"I am getting myself transferred to Calcutta. In a few years I will not only know the Bengali language but will also try to imbibe as much as I can of Bengali culture. This experiment will not only be interesting for me but also useful. But I will need your support."

She blossomed out with happiness.

"Manjeet, my support is with you, always."

"You will have to wait for me for some years."

"I will not only wait but will try the same experiment here as you are going to try in Bengal," she said smiling.

I held her hand in mine.

"No talk about me in your house right now", I told her. "Concentrate on your studies."

After a month of this talk Neelima was saying goodbye to me at the Amritsar station. Her eyes were moist but she was smiling. As the train moved both of us made our own resolves to make our dreams come true.

I stayed in a hostel for some days after reaching Calcutta. Then through the help of a colleague I was able to get accommodation in a house which an old couple rented out. The house was large. A portion of it was given on rent. The old woman knew only Bengali. She became my first teacher. To start with I had to use the sign language to communicate with her. Then as the days went by I picked up words of Bengali. Within six months I was able to speak the language reasonably well. I used to intentionally talk at home only in Bangla. I also realised that by learning someone's language one instantly comes very near the other. Bhattacharya uncle was a graduate of the old times. His library was full of Bengali literature. He spoke with knowledge not only about literature but also about politics, music, films, culture; in fact on all subjects. I used to spend hours taking to him. And I used to feel that I was drinking at the fountain of knowledge.

One day when dressed in a Bengali style kurta and pyjama I expressed a desire to accompany auntie to the temple. She was very surprised. She stared at me in bewilderment. Then overcome by joy she blessed me and said, "You have the forehead of a lucky man." I laughed. Every mother uses the same expression for her sons, irrespective of where she comes rom. "I will offer a red 'chunri' to Durga Ma if your wish is granted," she said, her bosom filled with love and affection.

In this interval Neelima and I corresponded regularly informing each other about our activities. Uncle had

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also taught me how to write Bengali. Therefore sometimes I used Bengali sentences in my letter to her. I learnt from her that after graduating she had taken up a job in a firm.

As time passed I felt that I had got everything I had come for. Neelima's letters were also asking me to come back. After four years of penance I was confident that I would now be acceptable to Neelima's mother. Therefore I informed Neelima that I was coming back. Uncle and auntie Bhattacharya came to see me off at the Calcutta station. Auntie gave me a saree for Neelima and said, "Bring your wife here to meet us when you get married." Uncle patted my back and said, "Don't worry. If you need me, let me know. I shall come over." I left Calcutta with their blessings.

Neelima was there to receive me when I reached Amritsar. She wore a salwar and kameez and displayed two pony-tails. She looked every inch a Punjabi lass. Seeing me in a Bengali style kurta and pyjama she laughed and said, in Bengali, "Bangla babu, Shondar; Ati shondar." I smiled.

"You have changed so much in three four years," she said, "I cannot believe that you are the same Manjeet Behl."

"How do I look?"

"You look even better than before." And she suddenly became serious as she said, "The language and the dress are something we have given to ourselves but the soul is the Creator's gift. What a pity that we attach more importance to man-given things than to God's gift. We go after appearances."

I laughed and said, "You have started talking philosophy, I see. And why not? After all you are a graduate now and a business executive."

"Don't make fun," she said innocently. "I am very happy today. From the day you gave me a lift on that hot afternoon I have accepted you as my lord and master."

"When do I come to your house?" I asked as we came out of the station talking.

"We will decide that tomorrow," she said. "You must be tired after a long journey. Go home and rest. Life's decisions cannot be taken on railway stations."

"Decisions?" I looked into her eyes. "Are there still any doubts?"

"Oh, you have become a full-blooded Bengali. Everything cannot be settled today. The rest we will talk about tomorrow."

As I got into a rickshaw, she said, "I have to go to office now. We shall meet again tomorrow evening."

I came home happy. By way of relations in the house all I had was my old aunt. After my mother's death she was the one who had given me love and affection. When she saw me after four years, tears of joy rolled down her eyes. She held me in her embrace and said, "You have lost a lot of weight son."

"Oh" I said to myself, "Why do all mothers think like this?" I hugged her tightly.

Releasing herself from my grip, she said, "Tell me what you want to eat."

I said, "Maachh Bhaat."

"Are you a Bengali?" she said.

"A good thing is a good thing Maasi," I said. "It can be relished re-

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gardless of whether one is a Punjabi or a Bengali." Maasi muttered something I could not understand.

The next twenty-four hours I spent very restlessly. To while away the time I talked incessantly to my aunt; told her about Calcutta; about Bhattacharya uncle and auntie. She kept on listening to me her mouth open in surprise. According to her human beings lived only in Punjab and she couldn't believe that a woman in Calcutta could treat me so well. I remembered what Neelima had once said: "My mother only likes Bengalis." For my aunt also the outside world was nothing else except a dark and lightless tunnel. She therefore naturally felt surprised listening to my story of light and brightness.

I went to meet Neelima next day as arranged. She was already there and looked extremely pretty in a light blue salwar kameez suit. I brought her out to the hotel lawn and sitting in a chair in front of her, asked, "When is this trial going to end?" She smiled. "I talked to my father last night," she said. "He wants to meet you."

"And your mother?"

"She is also keen to see you," she said.

"What have you told them; that I am a Bengali or a Punjabi?"

"Nothing yet," she replied as she looked at the menu. "Let's see what they take you to be."

I put my hands on hers. She looked at me.

"Neelima," I said, "I hope nothing goes amiss."

"Why should anything go wrong?" she answered confidently.

"O.K. What time shall I come?"

"Tomorrow evening. I have told them that you would be coming." Then I gave her a detailed account of all I did in Calcutta. She listened to me with great attention. When I gave her the saree Bhattacharya uncle and auntie had given for her, she looked at it lovingly and taking it to her lips kissed it. "Manjee," she said, "I am happy that you met a lady like Bhattacharya auntie in Calcutta. She has made me raise my head with pride before you for the love and affection she gave you."

"Neelima," I replied, "The fact is that whoever we meet overcoming our prejudices is bound to respond with friendliness. Love gives birth to love. The condition is that we should be sincere and straightforward. Have you completely given up wearing sarees?" "No", she said and moved her hand fondly on the saree in her hand.

It was getting on to sunset. She took leave of me with a promise that we will meet again the next day. On reaching home I also started thinking about the next day's meeting. All night I dreamt of nothing else except Neelima's house. When I got up in the morning I felt a strange flutter in my heart. The time for test was not far. Yet the day seemed to be crawling awefully slowly. The evening seemed to be refusing to come. The four years in Calcutta had not taken so long to pass as these twelve hours were taking.

As soon as it was 4 o'clock I got ready. Soon I was at Neelima's house. My heart missed a beat as I rang the bell of her flat. The door was opened by their servant. He guided me to the drawing room. The room was very tastefully decorated. The delicacy and culture of Bengal was evident from

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the decor. Soon Neelima's father came and introduced himself to me. When he learnt that I had recently come from Calcutta, the feeling of formality vanished between us. He had not heard a first-hand account of Bengal for a long time; a land where his childhood was spent; where his youth had blossomed. He wanted to know a hundred things. I was speaking to him in chaste Bengali. Uncle Bhattacharya had made me acquainted with many aspects of Bengal life — with Sarat Chander, Tagore, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Subhash Chandra Bose, Satyajit Ray. In fact like two good friends we were talking about every conceivable thing. So busy was I talking to him that I didn't even realise that Neelima had come into the room and sat on one side.

When the servant brought tea, Sushant Babu got up with a start. Laughing loudly he said, "Listening to your interesting conversation, I almost forgot why you have come." Then he called out, "Sumitra, where are you? Look, he is here." Not getting a response, he turned to Neelima and said, "Go and call your mother. Where is she?" Just then Neelima's mother came. She was every inch a Bengali lady. I felt my heart sinking. Her eyes were on me. I knew that the next few minutes will decide my fate. Then she said, "You look a Bengali."

"Yes" I said. I felt that my lips were quivering. I was also feeling happy that my experiment had succeeded. She smiled as she said, "My husband normally does not talk so much. You seem to be well educated."

"I did my M.Com." I said sheepishly.

Sushant Babu intervened. "Sumitra, he has come to ask for Neelima's hand in marriage."

"Neelima's hand?" the mother said haltingly.

"Yes, my dear," Sushant Babu continued. "That's why this meeting was fixed. You can give your reply in a day or two, if you like."

I knew that I had the full support of Sushant Babu. But the mother's face was without expression. Looking towards me she said, "If you had come a few years earlier, I would have readily said yes. But now things are different."

Her response shook me. I looked at her in silence. Sushant Babu looked towards me and then said to his wife, "What is different now Sumitra?"

The mother looked lovingly towards Neelima and said, "Earlier I very much wanted Neelima to marry a Bengali because I love Bengal. But for the last twenty years we have been in the Punjab. Neelima was barely three when we came here. Bengal has been a foreign land for her. She has grown up in Amritsar. And she knows only the customs and traditions of this land. She celebrates Punjabi festivals with her friends. Now she has taken up a job here. So she is going to be here permanently. I therefore feel that it would be better if she marries someone belonging to Punjab."

I looked in surprise towards Neelima. She seemed to be saying, "See, I have won." I laughed loudly and getting up said, "Then, let me tell you that I am a blue-blooded Punjabi." Neelima added, "Ma he is no other than Manjeet about whom I had spoken to you some years ago."

These words of Neelima brought happiness on all the faces.

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I GIVE YOU AN OCEAN

Dr. C. NARAYANA REDDY

I give you an ocean
Wrap it all over your body,
Then look for its effect —
You turn into a fathoming thought
And become an embodiment of confidence.

I give you a road
Wear it on your feet,
Then look for its effect —
You turn into a fit of anger
And become a crowd parading hunger.

I give you the sky
Fold and insert it in your head,
Then look for its effect —
Planets play to your tunes like dancing bulls
And stars come within your reach like lumps of butter.

I give you a flag
Unfurl and inhale it into your breath,
Then look for its effect —
Sticks march like torches
And huts echo like caves.

[This poem of Dr. Narayana Reddy, the celebrated poet and Jnan Pith awardee, is translated from the original Telugu by G. Ramakrishna Rao]

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SCIENCE OF A LONELY EVE

NIKHIL C. BOHIDAR

Lotus of beauty blooms
over the rippling lake
of youth

The round red mark
on the forehead dazzles
like a full moon of an autumn eve

Petalic lips bear the glow of dawn

Eye-lides're flooded with
darkness of new moon night

Coral wreath studded with
Jasmine bud glistens
between the mounts

And floats in the
kaazal smeared mercurial eyes
rauny clouses

standing under a
lonely tree
why is the rustic belle
looking engrossed
at the distant horizon?

Has she strayed and
guessing the path

Or waiting for someone
to come and take her
to his chest?

DAY OF JUDGEMENT

CHANDRA SHEKAR DUBAY

All paths unwinding
Lead to the inevitable - the day of judgement,
Laurels, truth and honesty - clad faces
Dark-eyes ringed with guilt.
And mighty hands spelling mighty tasks,
get numb as the darkness veils the sinking eyes.
Somewhere in the distance bells toll in a temple or church
Voices ring in a mosque " this alone is truth ".
A helpless man sees towards the oil-stained
pages of the Gita recited by his daughter
' Nainan chindanti sastraani,
Nainam dahati paavakaah '
And breathes his last amidst nervous cry.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Presuppositions of India's Philosophies : By Karl H. Potter. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi-7. Price : Rs. 150.

Designed as an introductory text for courses in the philosophical systems of classical Indian Thought (first published in 1963), this study applies itself to the fundamentals of Nyaya Vaisheshika, Buddhism, Jainism, Sankhya, Advaita Vedanta and draws attention to the special features of this approach. The author points out, for instance, the almost unanimous acceptance of the goal of freedom, *moksha*, by the generality of philosophers in India. There may be speculation as to the ways and means but that is at a lower level. He examines to what extent the Indian mind is concerned with the quality of life, the emphasis it lays on particular interests concerned with terrestrial goals. He describes how in the West, the general tendency has been one of separation of concerns of life from what is called pure thought and this has led to the birth of existentialist and similar movements in this century. The Indian philosopher is alive to the challenges of life, his thought has its roots in the urgencies of earthly existence.

The writer notes the acceptance by modern Indian spirituality of its responsibilities to the welfare of the common man. There is an increasing tendency to recognise the role of self-effort against the compulsions of Fate. He warns against the habit of accommodating Indian standards in philosophy to Western requirements. He writes : "Very few practising philosophers in India now-a-days know the details of the classical systems, and when they do, they know them by rote and not in such a way as to make them relevant to living problems. Yet this is strange, for the aims of classical Indian thought are such as to guarantee the relevance of philosophy to a human predicament and longing which does not change through the ages." (P. 255).

M.P. PANDIT

(This review was written by Mr. M.P. Pandit before his passing away)

A New Education for a New Consciousness : Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education, Sri Aurobindo Books Distribution Agency, Pondicherry – 605 002. Price : Rs. 100.

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The cataclysmic changes that have taken place in almost all spheres have also created new problems. Technological progress and modernisation have not helped man to become happy. Man's avaricious proclivities have become potent enough to create a moral vacuum. The eternal values have gone into oblivion, as man is after things which are ephemeral and banal. He has chosen a capricious path which explains the current crisis in every sphere.

The present educational system is not able to cater to the needs of either the body or the soul. In spite of its quantitative growth, it has been very much enfeebled in terms of quality. When there is no attempt to improve the quality of education, there is hardly any scope to promote spiritual values among the youth. Man therefore suffers from many hallucinations.

The book under review contains views of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on education. It is divided into seven chapters : (i) The Perfection of the Body; (ii) The Conversion of the Vital; (iii) The True Role of the Mind; (iv) To Be a Teacher; (v) The Awakening of the Psychic; (vi) The Conscious Seeking of the One and (vii) The Promise of a New World.

A man's success depends on his attitude towards life. If right attitudes are not cultivated, he can achieve nothing. We are busy in building up institutions, creating facilities for modernisation and using technology for human welfare. But, all these fail to deliver the goods unless there is a change of heart. The Mother has therefore rightly observed, "..... to seek to change the conditions without changing the consciousness is a vain chimera."

The individual, to perfect himself and the society, should know the desirable changes to be brought about in his character. It needs to be noted that everyone possesses two opposite tendencies of character. A courageous man may be a coward at times and the good man may suddenly acquire wicked impulses. The Mother, therefore, pertinently pointed out, "The indispensable starting-point (for transforming the character) is a detailed and discerning observation of the character to be transformed ..... all life is an education pursued more or less consciously, more or less willingly." (p. 57)

There is nothing wrong if man seeks happiness. But, as observed by Sri Aurobindo, "Superficial happiness and material success, however desirable to our vital nature, are not the main object of our existence ....." (p. 211) Man must, therefore, seek real happiness by discarding delusions.

Besides appendices, the book contains some photographs of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The printing and get-up are of high standard. Those who are wedded to spiritual values would be richly rewarded by going through this work.

DR. I. SATYA SUNDARAM

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The African Mind : A Literary Perspective : By V. Sivaramakrishnan. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Marg, Bombay – 7. Price : Rs. 35.

This book contains a collection of sixteen articles written by the author who was formerly of the Indian Economic Service, and on an assignment for the development of Small Scale Industries in some States in the African Continent as a Special Officer, had the opportunity to study not merely the subject of his assignment, but the native people, their customs, manners, history and culture, as well as folk-lore and myths, superstitions and beliefs, as reflected and affirmed in literary works — poems, plays, novels, short-stories and travelogues — written by African literateurs of the modern era in English and French. The author originally wrote these articles for the *Bhavan's Journal* during his sojourn in Tanzania, 1979-82.

Mr. Sivaramakrishnan, although an economist by vocation, is a perceptive and perspicacious literary person by aptitude and choice, as this bunch of articles substantiates. His study and analysis of the varied writings of about forty authors in depth and in detail, and presentation of the material in lucid and appealing style are commendable. The book serves as a good introduction to the great modern literary writings of Africa.

The writings have for their thematic content — colonial oppression by the foreign rulers, the subjection to slavery and the abject misery of the natives, poor and helpless, ignorant and innocent, pure sons and daughters of the African Mother Earth, their trials and tribulations, their hopes and aspirations, their failures and frustrations, their yearning for freedom from foreign domination, their angry protest against the iniquities and tortures perpetrated by the tyrannous masters and, above all, their natural human desires and striving for their fulfilment in the ambit of their ancestral customs and habits of living, cultural mores, and native purity still unsullied by external influences. Mr. Sivaramakrishnan draws parallels and apt comparisons between the African mind and the Indian, as well as the perspectives of Afro-English and Indo-Anglian writers in projecting their respective national ethos and culture, the steadfast devotion and attachment of the peoples to Mother Earth, their patriotic fervour and love of liberty, and in essence their very lives symbolised by sacrifice and service, subjugation and slavery.

The author describes how some of the African writers (among them is the Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka) employ a language, a queer mixture of English or French and their native idiom, hybrid in structure but effective in communication, highly readable and engrossing.

POTTUKUCHI SURYANARAYA MURTHY

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Episodes from Srimad Bhagavatam : By Sri C. Sitarama Murthy, Retired Principal, Ideal College, Kakinada. Copies can be had of : Prof. C. Somasundara Rao, 6-21-12, "Ganesa", East Point Colony, Visakhapatnam – 530 023. Price : Rs. 50.

Perhaps no other Telugu classic is so popular as *Srimad Bhagavatam* of Potana. Even the *Mahabhaata* of the trinity occupies a place next to it in popularity. It is not an exaggeration to state that hundreds of stanzas of Potana are recited in every nook and corner of Andhra by scholars and laymen alike. The fundamental difference between *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavatam* is that the former appeals to our intellect, and we are highly delighted by the poetic beauties of the trinity, whereas when we read the latter, we forget ourselves and go into a state of rapture as it appeals to our heart. It is not to say that Potana is in any way inferior to the trinity in imagery or poetic exuberance. The felicity of language, the Ardha and Sabdalankaras, mainly the Antyanuprasa employed, and above all, the wonderful depiction of different aspects of Bhakti have endeared Potana to the Telugu-speaking people.

Sri C. Sitarama Murthy, a veteran scholar and teacher of English, has succeeded in his attempt to present a faithful prose translation of some episodes of Potana's *Mahabhagavatam*. Though he says in his preface, out of humility, that he is not competent to undertake such a task, a critical study of his book reveals that he has accomplished his task quite successfully. The book which has five parts deals with all important episodes of *Bhagavatam* in a lucid style that captivates the hearts of the readers. His method of narrating the relevant parts of the story first and then discussing the salient features of characters like Prahlada, Dhruva, Ambarisha and others is really superb. The author has convincingly brought about the similarities and differences between the two child prodigies Prahlada and Dhruva. His observation that unlike Prahlada, Dhruva fails to dislodge hatred from his heart reveals the author's analytical ability and brings to light the depth of his perception.

Another aspect of Sri Sitarama Murthy's success is his faithful rendering into chaste prose the summary of Potana's famous stanzas like, "Kaare raajulu", etc. The author's rich experience in temporal and spiritual fields, coupled with the knowledge he acquired from Sriman Sribhashyam Appalacharyulu have given him fine equipment to undertake this stupendous task, which he has accomplished commendably.

I am sure that the non-Telugu speaking people who read this book will derive as much pleasure and enjoyment as the Andhras, who read Potana in the original.

" JANAKI JANI "

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The Sanskrit Drama : By A Berridale Keith, Motilal Banarsidass Pvt., Limited, Delhi. Price : Rs. 175.

This book under review needs no introduction to the world of Sanskrit scholars. It has become a classic, since its first publication in 1924, and in spite of other later publications on Sanskrit drama, it has its unique place in its field. The origin of the Sanskrit drama, and its development, Dramatic Theory and Dramatic Practice are the four main subjects dealt with. Prof. Keith opines that it was through the use of epic recitation that the latent possibilities of drama are evoked. Other theories were discussed and refuted. Religious traces of drama are not ruled out. Greek influence on Indian drama is discussed. While dealing with the development of drama, stress is laid on the great writers and on dramatists who wrote before the first millennium. The story, nature of characters, dialogues, languages, Prakrits, Metres and technical types etc., of each drama together with its date are discussed. Greek dramas are compared with the dramas of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti. Verses quoted are translated into English. Defects and merits of each drama are also pointed out. Sanskrit and English indexes are added. No library worth the name can do without this book.

B.K. Rao

The Autobiography of a Freethinker,
The Cosmic Guidance for Man,
Studies in Transcendental Knowledge and Eternal Wisdom,
Madanapalle, the Blessed Jewel of Andhra Pradesh,
Esoteric Wisdom,
The Hand of Destiny, and Satvic Approach for Human Survival : All By Sri S. Subramanya Iyer and published by him at 111/49, LIC Colony, III Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore – 560 011.

Mr. S. Subramanya Iyer, the author of the books under review, as we notice from his autobiographic account, is concerned about the man and his endeavour on this planet, right from his early days. He moved here and there, read this and that author, heard this speaker and that, discussed matters of his heart's content to others verbally and thro' correspondence and never hesitated to share his views with others. The splitting of the atom and the dropping of bombs over Nagasaki and Hiroshima in the course of the second world war moved him very greatly and set him for still higher thinking on the human activity. The Paramanu Vijnana in technology makes him move about the systems of meditation such as the transcendental one, etc.

The Cosmic Guidance for Man is dedicated to world peace and is stated to be his flashes in intuition. Couched in verse as well as prose the ideas should set people think on the right lines. The author is understandably forceful when he talks about one-world and world-government.

His concern for the man of the globe and his total advancement make the author redefine terms like

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Dharma, love and Yoga. He supposes a possibility of revolution in these fields and sets paradigms for that.

Madanapalle, The Blessed Jewel of Andhra Pradesh, brings out the glories of the town of the past and present and inspires men and women to visit the place and its surroundings. Mention is made of the latest work of theosophists there, not excluding J. Krishnamurti. The quotes made available in the book will certainly be useful for one and all to "enrich and enlighten" themselves.

Esoteric Wisdom, dedicated to the enlightenment of Man, is again a compendium of 20 poetic pieces, 60 aphoristic statements on the constitution of self. The author exhorts one and all to "inquire into the meaning of life ... and consciously accelerate the spiritual journey."

The Hand of Destiny describes the future of man and indicates the possible advent of a Superman. Reconstruction of the nation and re-establishment of the glory of Bharat are very dear to the author.

The effort reaches its culmination when the author presents his treatise for world-peace and world-social order, in the book last mentioned in the series. The evolution of a non-party state rooted in Dharma and the inculcating of social and moral virtues in the system of education are advocated here.

The author, no doubt, has strong convictions in what he writes or propagates; and is equally enthusiastic in presenting his thoughts. One only wishes he makes his books more flawless in style and printing so that an equally receptive reader is not put off. We wish the author greater opportunities for furthering his ideas into actualities.

N.C. RAMANUJACHARY

TELUGU

Arsheya Vaastu Vidyaa Rahasyam : By Sriramakavacham Venkateswara Sarma, Vijayalaxmipuram, Bapatla – 522 101. Price : Rs. 45.

Sri Sarma, a renowned Pandit in Vaastu and astrology, authored many books on those subjects which won him laurels. He already wrote a book "Samiksha Vaastu Mayurya" This book under review is complementary to that. The value of these books lies in his close adherence to the instructions of the ancient sages expressed in their works. Wherever there are differences of opinions, he either reconciles them or gives his preference to a view on a rational basis.

This book he starts with pointing out the importance of time, name and the builder and his Nakshatra. Then he takes up Sankusthapana. He discusses all the varying theories as to where the Sankam is to be installed, and arrives at a decision. He corrects many modern Vaastu writers with authority. He draws distinction between Sankusthapana and Silaasthapana, and describes three kinds of installations (Pratishtaa).

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Information regarding levels of earth in a house and site, temples and idols is also given. Importance of North-West is pointed out. How to avoid some evil effects is answered. Many helpful guiding principles and instructions make the book highly useful. This book together with its predecessor, serves as a good guide to Vaastu students and Pandits. It dispels many doubts and points out the defects in our present customs also and puts us on the right track.

B.K. SASTRY

Maharshi Vedavyaasudu – Vyasa Darshana: By Dr. Chalasaani Subba Rao, Bhavani Sadan, Amba Agraharam, Machilipatnam – 521 001. Price : Rs. 30.

The book under review is an analytical work on the life and writings of the great sage, Vedavyaasa, who is accepted by all as having been the person who had codified or divided the Veda into four divisions — Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Adharvanaveda. This book is divided into sixty-two small chapters, each chapter discussing one specific aspect. An attempt was made to fix the historical time of the birth of Vedavyaasa, the times of the various characters who appear in the epic, Mahabharata, and also to fix the date of Bharata Yuddha. Relying on the writings of other historians, the writer fixes 2107 BC as the year of birth and 1917 BC as the year of Nirvaana of Vedavyaasa. Accordingly he also fixes the dates for the other Mahabharata characters.

The writer has made a number of categorical statements in the first 64 pages. It is difficult to agree with a good number of them, because of the absence of the sources of the statements.

From page 65 onwards, in 30 chapters, the writer discusses a variety of topics germane to the writings of Vedavyaasa, by and large, the statements made in this part are positive, universal and non-controversial. It makes pleasant and easy reading.

The writer contends that Vedas are not "Apaurusheyas" and that they are "written" by a number of ancient Rishis at different times. He made sincere efforts to sustain this contention. However this is contrary to the popular belief, and he is sincere in mentioning this fact. He is honest to state that one should study the "Veda Vaangmayam" with a belief in their morals and one should not indulge in hairsplitting analytical exercise in the guise of historicity.

In spite of these minor shortcomings, the book is highly readable and instructive. The last 78 pages are fit to be included in the high school text-books for improving the moral content of the curriculum, and inculcate secular morality in the futue generations at least.

DR. B.P. RAO

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THE ENDURING RELEVANCE OF SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

NANI A. PALKHIVALA

I FEEL PRIVILEGED and honoured to be asked to deliver the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Lecture this year. The series started in 1955, and eminent men have spoken in the past decades on various matters of vital importance and significance.

Looking to the state of our democracy today, I thought no topic would be of greater importance than the enduring relevance of Sardar Patel. More than ever before, we need to recall what he stood for and tirelessly strove to create. " My life is my message, " said Mahatma Gandhi, and Sardar Patel could have said the same.

To question the enduring relevance of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to India today is like questioning the relevance of the sun to the solar system. You cannot conceive of a solar system without the sun, and you cannot conceive of modern India without Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

In recent world history, two events have thrown up a striking galaxy of talent. The first was when the thirteen colonies in America were fighting for their independence. From 1776 to 1783 the United States of America (as it came to be known later) produced an extraordinary cluster of outstanding men who were the founders of the great republic. In the twenty-five years between 1922 and 1947, India had a comparable galaxy of talent - no inferior to that which America produced - and our leaders combined talent with sterling character. Undoubtedly Sardar Patel was in the top rank.

Sardar Patel was one of the founders of our Constitution. Luckily the Constitution was drafted by the Constituent Assembly which was not elected on the basis of adult franchise. First-rate minds were hand-picked from all parts of India—for their knowledge, vision and dedication. After three years of laborious and painful toil, they completed the drafting of the Constitution which a former Chief Justice rightly described as " sublime ". It was the longest Constitution in the world, till the new Constitution of Yugoslavia came into force a few years before the dismemberment of that ill-starred country.

* This is the text of the Patel Memorial Lecture delivered in 1992 by Sri Nani Palkhivala, the renowned jurist, expert in finance and formerly Ambassador to U.S.

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Consider the sharp contrast between India in 1947 and the British Colonies in America after their successful war of independence. They started with every conceivable disadvantage. They were just a loose alliance of thirteen sovereign states bound only by articles of confederation. The thirteen Colonies had no unified nationality, no head of state, no central government, no central judiciary, no national currency, no common system of taxation. In the summer of 1787, the delegates in Philadelphia drafted a document only seven Articles long, which, with its twenty-seven amendments, has lasted more than two centuries and continues to be the fundamental laws of the world's most powerful democracy.

The story of Sardar Patel's life is easily told. The traditional date of his birth is 31st October 1875. But really speaking, nobody knows the exact day on which he was born. The traditional date is what he gave for his matriculation examination and he never changed it — rather typical of the constancy which characterized his mental make-up.

Sardar Patel was born to parents who were deeply religious. It is remarkable how frequently the children of deeply religious parents fare well in life. Vallabhbhai himself became the architect of modern India, while his brother, Vithalbhai, was the first Speaker of the Central Legislature. Vallabhbhai was a very affectionate man, though there were not many occasions when he displayed his affectionate nature. He has a very fine sense of humour. Mahatma Gandhi was gone on record to say that during the sixteen months when he was in jail, he was kept in peals of laughter by Vallabhbhai who was a co-inmate.

Vallabhbhai never courted publicity. He never projected himself anywhere but quietly did his work. He was a true Karmayogi. After he became a widower at the age of thirty-three, the only love in his life was his motherland to which he was passionately devoted.

He has three great ambitions. First of all, he wanted to consolidate India. In the five thousand years of its history, India was never united : it had always been a group of different states. Vallabhbhai wanted to bring into existence a united, homogeneous India when it become a republic in 1950.

The Times (of London) said that Vallabhbhai's achievement of the integration of the Indian States would rank with that of Bismarck and probably higher. The *Manchester Guardian* rightly said :

" Without Patel, Gandhiji's idea would have had less practical influence and Nehru's idealism less scope. Patel was not only the organiser of the fight for freedom but also the architect of the new State when the fight was over. The same man is seldom successful as rebel and statesman. Sardar Patel was the exception ".

While launching the PEPSU Union at Patiala, Sardar Patel said :

" This is the first time in history, after centuries that India can call itself an integrated whole in the real sense of the term ... We must work with unity. If we falter or fail, we shall consign ourselves to eternal shame and disgrace. "

His second ambition was to ensure the survival of a united country through the instrument of a strong civil service. He conceived of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in place of the Indian Civil Service (ICS); and it was he who also conceived of the

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Indian Police Service (IPS). Both these services are very much extant today and have enabled India to survive as a democratic state, while the fortunes of political parties keep changing.

His third ambition was to make India economically strong, prosperous and progressive. This ambition was not fulfilled. After the death of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on 15th December 1950, the Government consciously discarded the economic policies of the Sardar and adopted a sterile form of socialism which was the bane of India till the present Govenment started its new policy of liberalization.

The nation has not realized the greatness of Vallabhbhai as it should have done. If Vallabhbhai had not lived, India would not be what it is today. He aimed at integration in two ways — not only territorial integration, but the integration of the different communities by developing a sense of national identity. There were 554 Indian States which comprised two-thirds of India, while only one-third was British India. He brought all of them together, while continuing to remain on terms of mutual affection and respect with the former Rulers. When the Russian leader Khrushchev visited India in 1956, he expressed his surprise that India had managed to liquidate the Princely States without liquidating the Princes.

Sardar Patel was also the Chairman of the Minorities Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly. He sought to forge communal integration. He made different communities give up their claim for separate electorates. Even the spokesman of the Parsis had in mind a separate electorate. But Vallabhbhai merely smiled at the ridiculous idea and the matter was not discussed again. The Parsis were a microscopic minority, but the Muslims, the Sikhs and the Christians were in substantial numbers. Even in those days the Sikhs demanded Khalistan. Sardar Patel dealt with the problem with great understanding. He went to the heart of the Sikh hinterland. He talked to the Sikhs in Amritsar and impressed upon them how we all have to live together as brothers and sisters. The passionate plea of Sardar Patel worked. In a powerful speech he made at Patiala in October 1947 he said that we should not involve ourselves in endless disputes and that we could not afford to follow the mirage of " stans " like Khalistan, Sikhistan or Jatistan. He pointed out that such separatism could only turn India into " Pagalistan ", a land of lunatics.

He was a true leader, in the sense that he did not flatter the people but plainly told them where they were wrong. In August 1947 he said again in ringing words how and why India could not be divided. India, he said, is one and indivisible. You cannot divide the sea or split the running waters of a river. He said this not merely to the Muslims and the Sikhs but also to the Hindus when the RSS made a strong plea that India should become a Hindu state. His words were :

" We in the Government have been dealing with the RSS movement. They want that Hindu Rajya or Hindu culture should be imposed by force. No Government can tolerate this. "

Vallabhbhai was not against anybody except the fanatic. If you were a fanatic he was against you, whether you were a Hindu or a Muslim or a Sikh. It is wrong to portrary him as

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being anti-Muslim. Vallabhbhai, as the Home Minister, had the courage to ban the RSS. That conclusively shows how totally secular and non-communal Sardar Patel was in his approach. He told the Hindu Mahasabha :

" If you think that you are the only custodians of Hinduism, you are mistaken. Hinduism preaches a broader outlook on life. There is much more of tolerance in Hinduism than is supposed. "

In his speech in January 1948 at Calcutta, Sardar Patel warned the country that there could never be any serious talk of a Hindu state. India had elected to be a secular state. He solemnly declared :

" If the Government could not act as trustee for the entire population irrespective of caste, religion or creed, it does not deserve to continue for a single day. "

In 1947 when people were jubilant that we attained *swaraj*, there were two persons who struck a note of dissent - Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel. The response of Sardar Patel to independence gained in 1947 was memorable :

" What we have is not *swaraj*, but only freedom from foreign rule. The people have still to win internal *swaraj*, abolish distinctions of caste or creed, banish untouchability, improve the lot of the hungry masses, and live as one joint family — in short, to create a new way of life and bring about a change of heart and a change of outlook. "

To Sardar Patel, the unity and integrity of India was of paramount importance. He shared the view of the Indian thinker who, when he was told that the British divide and rule, gave the profound response, " No, it is not the British who divide and rule. It is we who divide and they rule. " That is why he was against the creation of linguistic States. In December 1949, the Working Committee of the Congress directed that a separate Andhra State should be created forthwith. In spite of this directive, Sardar Patel took no action. On the contrary, he criticized openly this directive of his own party. At a public meeting in Trivandrum in May 1950 he said :

" Some people say they want provinces on a linguistic basis like Andhra, Tamil and Kerala. What will be its effect in the North or in the West nobody cares to consider. We should cease to think in terms of different states or provinces. Instead we should think that we are Indians and should develop a sense of unity. "

While the unification and integration of India was his greatest achievement, only next in importance was his creation of a strong and independent civil service. He trusted and respected the officers and gained their affection and deep regard. This put the civil servants on their honour to work for him to the limit of their capacity and never, as far as humanly possible, to let him down. H.V.R. Iyengar in his " Administration in India - A Historical Review " relates one typical incident :

" On one occasion, I took a decision in his absence and reported it to him afterwards. He told me that if he had been consulted he would not have taken that decision. I was very unhappy about this, but he asked me not to worry and said that every human being makes mistakes. When the matter subsequently came before the Cabinet he told them that the decision was his, and there the matter ended. "

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In Sardar Patel's words, " The most dangerous thing in a democracy is to interfere with the Services. " If today the police force is wholly demoralized in most States, it is entirely due to the political interference by ministers and other politicians in the discharge by the police of their professional duties.

The greatest tragedy of India has been that Sardar Patel's economic policies were not implemented. His realism and pragmatism in economic matters were foolishly ignored after his death, as I have said earlier.

Sardar Patel never posed as a socialist. He had no property of his own, except his personal belongings. Once an ardent socialist approached him with an appeal to abolish inequality of wealth and cited as an instance that X was master of several millions. The Sardar let him expatiate on the distribution of surplus wealth. When he had finished, Sardar Patel coolly looked at him and said :

" I know the extent of X's wealth. If all of it were distributed equally among the people of India, your share would be about four annas and three pies. I am willing to give it to you from my own pocket if you undertake to talk no more about this. "

He wanted to purge capitalism of its ugly face. But he realized that wealth has to be created first, before it can be distributed.

So long as Sardar Patel was alive, there was no nationalization. He said :

" Some people want us to nationalize all industry. How are we to run nationalized industries if we cannot run our ordinary administration ? It is easy to take over any industry we want to, but we do not have the resources to run them, enough experienced men, men of expertise and integrity. "

Sardar Patel started the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) because he wanted a fair deal to be given to labour. But he was not in the popularity contest and he had no patience with people who were. He was against the mindless calls for strikes made by trade union leaders who lived in a thought-free zone. He said in Calcutta in January 1948 :

" Regarding strikes, I feel that it is deplorable that they have been made so cheap. They are now props of leadership of labour and have ceased to be a legitimate means of redressing grievances of labour ... The maxim should be " produce and then distribute equitably ". Instead they fight before even producing wealth. It is to restore sanity and a fair deal between labour and employers and to give a correct lead to labour that we set up the Indian National Trade Union Congress. "

To Sardar Patel, the plighted word was sacred : he never broke his word. He had a sense of honour and good faith which successive governments so sadly lacked. He never dreamt that the promise contained in Article 291 of the Constitution to give privy purses to the Princes would be broken later. The aggregate amount of privy purses guaranteed to the Rulers of different States came to an insignificant sum of less than Rupees Five Crores. Rulers died in normal course, and the privy purse was reduced when their successors were recognised as Rulers. Yet, the then Government abolished privy purses disregarding the constitutional mandate. Referring to the guarantee regarding pensions to

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the covenanted services, which was to be embodied in Article 314, Sardar Patel said in the Constituent Assembly on 10th October 1949 :

> " Have you read history ? Or, is it that you do not care for recent history after you have begun to make history ? If you do that, then I tell you we have a dark future. Learn to stand upon your pledged word... Can you go behind these things ? Have morals no place in the new Parliament ? Is that how we are going to begin our new freedom ? Do not take a lathi and say, " Who is to give you a guarantee ? We are a Supreme Parliament. " Have you supremacy for this kind of thing ? – To go behind your word ? – If you do that, that supremacy will go down in a few days. "

Like Article 291, Article 314 was also brazenly deleted after the Sardar's death.

In 1950, the last year of his life, Sardar Patel repeatedly expressed his total disillusionment with the debased standards of politicians and the malfunctioning of Indian democracy. On 27th May 1950 at Porbandar (Gandhiji's home town), in a mood of introspection, he said :

" We have not digested Gandhiji's teachings. We are merely imitating. We have adult franchise but do not know how to use it. If we continue to indulge in personal jealousies and power-hunting, we shall turn into poison what Gandhiji had got for us.

" During the last three years we have worked in a manner which has brought us only shame. We have strayed from the right road and must get back to it and understand Gandhiji's teachings and apply them in life. "

The last Independence Day message which Sardar Patel delivered was on 15th August 1950. His eloquent words deserve to be taught and read in every school and college. They come from the deep anguish in his heart, and require to be quoted in extenso :

" Certain tendencies and developments in our administrative and public affairs fill me with some disquiet and sadness of heart. The country can realize the feelings of one who has spent the major part of his public life in witnessing epics of sacrifice and selfless endeavour and feats of discipline and unity and who now finds enacted before him scenes which mock at the past.

" Our public life seems to be degenerated into a fen of stagnant waters ; our conscience is troubled with doubts and despair about the possibilities of improvement. We do not seem to be profiting either from history or experience. We appear helplessly to be watching the sickle of time taking away the rich corn, leaving behind the bare and withered stalks.

" Yet the tasks that confront us are as complex and taxing as ever. They demand the best in us while we face them with indifferent resources. We seem to devote too much time to things that hardly matter and too little to those that count. We talk, while the paramount need is that of action. We are critical of other people's exertions, but lack the will to contribute our own. We are trying to overtake others by giant strides while we have hardly learnt to walk...

" On this, the third milestone of our career as a free country, I hope my

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countrymen will forgive me if I have tried to turn their searchlight inwards. In my life, I have now reached a stage when time is of the essence. Age has not diminished the passion which I bear to see my country great and to ensure that the foundations of our freedom are well and securely laid. Bodily infirmity has not dimmed my ardour to exert my utmost for the peace, prosperity and advancement of the Motherland. But ' the bird of time has a little way to fly, and lo ! it is on the wing ' .

" With all the sincerity and earnestness at my command and claiming the privilege of age, I, therefore, appeal to my fellow countrymen on this solemn and auspicious day to reflect on what they see in and around themselves and, with the strength and faith that comes from self-introspection, sustain the hope and confidence which an old servant of theirs still has in the future of our country. "

He had the strength to speak out, bluntly and fearlessly, to his own party. At the Nasik session of the Congress on 19th September 1950, he said :

" The goal of *Puma Swaraj* must claim our constant attention. The question which every Congressman must ask himself, or herself, is whether we have met this claim or demand. If we are honest with ourselves and true to our conscience, I am afraid, the reply must be in the negative. The greatest danger to the Congress comes from within rather than without. "

Our greatest tragedy is that the lessons taught by this outstanding Indian patriot and statesman who unquestionably ranks in the world class, are so little remembered today.

Winston Churchill said that one of the marks of true greatness is the impact which a man makes on his contemporaries. By this test, Sardar Patel must be regarded as one of the greatest Indians of this century.

" Jawaharlal is a thinker and Sardar is a doer, " said Gandhiji at the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931. The Sardar was also a thinker but not an impractical visionary.

Lord Wavell wrote in his diary that Sardar Patel " is certainly the most impressive of the Congress leaders and has the best balance." The Sardar shared Wavell's belief that India can be governed firmly or not at all.

President Rajendra Prasad wrote in May 1959 :

" That there is today an India to think and talk about, is very largely due to Sardar Patel's statemanship and firm administration ... Yet we are apt to ignore him. "

The India of today is certainly not the India of Sardar Patel's dreams. After five and forty years of independence, the picture that emerges is that of a nation potentially great but in a state of moral decay. We suffer from a fatty degeneration of conscience and an unchecked dissolution of values. We have no sense of shame or shock that under a first-class Constitution we run a third-class democracy. The country with the noblest cultural heritage has become the most criminalized and the most violent democracy on earth.

What a transformation could be effected if we relearn the values which Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel stood for ! The environment will change beyond recognition when we instal *dharma* on the

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throne again. The country is crying aloud for moral leadership, fearless and forthright, which will tell the people - as Sardar Patel did - what does not flatter them and what they do not want to hear.

Just as we celebrate 15th August as the Day of Independence, we should celebrate the anniversary of Sardar Patel 's birth - 31st October - as the Day of Inter-dependence : the dependence of the 26 States upon one another, the dependence of the numerous castes upon one another, the dependence of our manifold communities upon one another, in the sure knowledge that we are one nation. A regenerated India, freed from petty squabbles, violence and communal bitterness - and cured of the cancer of divisiveness - would be the greatest monument to the Sardar 's memory. ●

S I L E N C E

SUBHENDU MUND

If the answer to all the questions
and the meeting of all the signs
were in pronouncing a mere word,
I would gladly show you my entire vocabulary
The word I shall now utter
may be my last one –
my last pronouncement !

I have already spoken a lot of nonsense,
and have caused many unnecessary waves
in the quiet atmosphere. See,
I silence myself now - my tongue is stunned.

Forgive me - forgive my silence
Well, what can a man do
in one life me ? How many millions of words
can he strew around himself ?
words are like boomerangs - they always
come back to you. Dear friends, and enemies
throw the poet out of the dais.

Let the poet keep his silence
in his own way. Silence is his
war-cry ;
silence is his
armistice.
Do you think a poet can't see
what's happening around ?
If he can't sing in your tune,
let him better keep his
silence.

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GLOBALISATION OF PHILOSOPHY

PROF. K. SATCHIDANANDA MURTHY

I DO NOT THINK there is any one Eastern civilisation or culture, or any one Western civilization or culture. There are at the most Indian, Chinese, Japanese and other civilisations/cultures, even as there are French, Spanish, German, Iranian, Arabic and other civilisations and cultures. Certainly there is no one Western or even European philosophy ; there are a number of philosophies which have been formulated down the ages in different countries of, say, Europe, Asia and Americas. Similarly it is difficult to say there is any one monolithic single Indian philosophy or Chinese philosophy. There always have been and are a number of philosophies which originated and developed, and are developing in China, India and other Eastern countries, as is the case with Western countries. All the civilizations/cultures of the world, as well as their philosophical and scientific ideas have always mutually interacted, influenced, mingled, got fused and, sometimes, given rise to new syntheses. No country, race or nation can claim to be the teacher or the leader of the world, by virtue of the superiority of its science, philosophy or religion, or on the ground of always and consistently having advocated and practised the highest morality. No country is wiser, holier or greater than others ; no race or people is the chosen one. In every country and among all people the intellectually endowed, competent and hardworking have discovered truths of some sort or other, and these have got disseminated and have become the common property of humanity. No people at any time were deprived of the sense of what is right and wrong, how to be ethical and how to be spiritual. But in the extent, quality and depth of their insights into these matters there have been differences among peoples and individuals.

Notwithstanding what has been said so far, it is necessary to point out that it has been generally contended by Westerners that only in Greek civilization " a philosophic movement " and " a scientific tradition " went " hand in hand " and this " dual tradition has shaped the civilization of the West ". (Bertrand Russell, *Wisdom of the West*, Epilogue, Premier Books, New York, 1964, p. 405.) One might

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question this statement : does history prove that philosophy and science have in general always, or at least for most of the time, gone hand in hand in Western civilization ? And, what does " going hand in hand " mean ? Presumably this : They must constantly be aware of each other, and not only not contradict each other, but be in harmony with each other ; and, moreover, not attempt to do what the other has to do. Both philosophers and scientists should agree on what it is to be philosophic and what it is to be scientific, and not trespass into each other's domain. The limits of science as well as of philosophy should be acknowledged by both scientists and philosophers ; otherwise there might be an effort to make philosophy scientific and science philosophic, obliterating one or the other. A similar confusion is possible when a claim is made that religion and philosophy, or spirituality and philosophy can and should go hand in hand. Some Indians have claimed that it is the particular characteristic and chief merit of Indian philosophy that it is practical and spiritual, while the Western is merely speculative and materialistic. The truth, of course, is not so. There has been a good ideal of soteriological and spiritual (or religious) philosophy in the West, and a more or less equal amount of scientific and materialistic philosophy in India.

II

Anyhow, what is a somewhat consensuously acceptable understanding of philosophy ? To take two supreme examples from the West and East, many may not dispute Socrates and Confucius being called philosophers. Socrates declared that his preoccupation was an unceasing quest for truth : " As long as I have breath and strength, I will never cease my occupation with philosophy. I will continue the practice of accosting whosoever I meet and saying to him, ' Are you not ashamed of setting your heart on wealth and honours while you have no care for wisdom and truth and making your soul better ' ?" (Bury, *A History of Freedom of Thought*, cited by S. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society*, p.60.)

According to Confucius' disciple Tseng Tzu, " integrity and reciprocity " was the single thread that ran through all his teachings. Integrity or *Chung* is the desire and attempt to sustain and develop others in the same way in which one desires and tries to sustain and develop oneself. Reciprocity or *shu* is not to do to others what one does not want to be done to oneself. This presupposes that men can mutually respond to each other and that the example of the virtuous can powefully influence others. Confucius considered *Jen* + as the distinguishing characteristic of man. It is something everyone has to develop more and more and thereby increasingly become human. *Jen* is love of fellow-men and authenticity. To be authentic is to be sincere and upright (*chih*) : to be as one really is and to express oneself in speech and conduct as such, according to *Li*. *Li* is the right

+ Variously translated as virtue, goodness, humanity, or love.

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way of doing things, as well as an order in which everything is in its proper place. It is customs and good taste, rituals and propriety. *Li* educates one to become a member of a community, by making him accept restrictions which enable him to overcome his ego. It trains one's emotions and feelings and inculcates the right ways of expressing them. [From my *Far Eastern Philosophies*, Chapter II.]

I may now give samples of one type of philosophising from India : " By whom directed does mind reach its object and the vital force, which precedes all, does its duty ? By whom willed is speech uttered and the eyes and ears directed ? By that effulgent being who is the Mind of the mind, the Vitality of the vital force, the Speech of speech, the Eye of the eye and the Ear of the ear. The intelligent freeing themselves from identification with the senses and mind, and keeping aloof from this empirical world become immortal ". (*Kena Upanishad*, 1-2.) " When the intelligent person concentrates his mind on the subtle Self and thereby meditates on the eternal Deity, located in the mind, but accessible with difficulty, existing within this miserable body itself, he gives up both pleasure and sorrow. The Self is neither born, nor dies. It did not originate from anything and nothing originates from it. It is eternal, undecaying and imperishable, and ever unharmed, though it dwells in the body. It neither destroys, nor is destroyable. Subtler than the subtle and greater than the great, the Self is situated in everyone's heart. A desireless man, becoming serene, sees the glory of the Self, and freed from sorrow ". (*Katha Upanishad*, 12, 18, 20.) " The knower of Brahman (Being) attains the supreme. Brahman is truth, knowledge and infinite. The wise man who knows the Bliss of Brahman is not afraid of anything. (*Taittiriya Upanishad*, II. 1.1; II.IV.1.) " Whoever knows the supreme Brahman becomes Brahman indeed ". (*Mundaka Upanishad*, III. 2.9.)

Schroedinger considered that " the one great philosophical question which embraces all others, is the one that Plotinus expressed by the brief – *Who are we ?* Not only the Upanishads, but also the *I Ching* with its Appendices and Chu Hsi answered this question in their own ways. Change (*I*) is what is found everywhere; it is movement ever returning to its starting point. It is *constant* change with a principle of order at its centre. This simple, consistent and universal change, which includes everything, great and small, the human and the natural, is constant because it operates within two antithetical polar limits (*Yin and Yang*). It is cyclic, and its matrix is *T'ai - chi* (the Supreme Ultimate). A Taoist monk said the mutual resonance (*Kan*) of things is the fundamental idea of *I Ching*. Put in another way, all the myriad principles (patterns) are subsumed in the one universal Principle (the great Pattern). " *Wan-li Kuei-yu i-li yeh* " (Ch'eng Hao). Heaven and Earth and all that is therein is Spirit ("*Ying t'ien-ti chih-chien chieh shen*), the mysterious

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perfection of the ten thousand things (Chu Hsi). Chu Hsi conceived the universe as a real interrelated whole made up of Matter (*Ch'i*) and organised by principle (*Li*). The principle of all things, according to Chu Hsi, is the Great Ultimate (*T'ai-Chi*), which is in everything including man and prior to everything. Though it is one, it is found in its entirety in everything, just as the one moon is reflected in many rivers and lakes. It is unlimited and formless. It has the principle of activity and tranquillity ; so it generates the forces operating within the universe. It is not known how it does this. The Great Ultimate which is in men and all things is " simply the Principle of the highest good ". It is beyond everything and within all. It is what makes possible universe that is orderly change. (my *Far Eastern Philosophies*, pp. 37, 45, 82-3.)

I wish I could give instances of philosophising at least from Al-Razi, Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, and Ibn er-Rushd, and a couple of Japanese thinkers, but the scope of this paper will not allow it.

III

The idea that the universe is controlled by Mind or Intelligence is found in an Egyptian inscription known as *Memphite Drama*. It is the earliest known record of a philosophical idea, dating back to the end of the 4th millennium. Two thousand years later Ikhanaton revived it. Besides this, the Egyptians formulated the conception of an eternal universe, the notion of a constant recurrence of events, and the doctrine of natural cause and effect. The *Maxims* of Ptahhotep, the vizier of a Pharaoh of the V dyansty about 2500 B.C., contains moral philosophy of a high order. Graciousness, tolerance, kindness, cheerfulness, and above all righteousness and justice, even sacrificing self-interest, are enjoined. Righteousness, it is said, endures as it is powerful. Greed, sensuality and pride are to be shunned, while moderation and restraints are to be cultivated. On morality no earlier literature than this is available.

In about 2100 B.C. on a wall of the tomb-chapel of the Pharaoh of XI Dynasty is found engraved *The Song of the Harp-Player*, which is an exposition of scepticism regarding the other world and gods, and a denigration of fame, riches and power, which are just delusions, Death, the time of arrival of which is not known, is the only inevitable certainty for all men. So, one should fulfil one's desires and seek pleasure, but at the same time gain good name through charity and benevolence. In a composition of a Priest of Heliopolis in the years following the collapse of the Old Kingdom, is to be found social criticism which appears relevant even today. In *The Plea of the Eloquent Peasant* composed in the time of the XI Dynasty (about 2100 B.C.) the functions of the rulers and the nature of administrative justice are expounded. Ancient Egyptian, or North African, thinking might be the earliest known sort of philosophising.

Martin Bernal has authored a book on the " Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization " (Rutgers Uni-

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versity Press, 1987). *India and Europe*, " An Essay in understanding " by Wilhel Halofass (SUNY Press 1988) is by one of the foremost living Indologists with an excellent philosophical training. Then there is Roger-pol Droit's *L'oubli De L'Inde*, " Une Amnesie Philosophique ", Presses Universitaires de France, 1989, and his lecture in English on the " French Philosophers Attitudes towards Indian Ideas and Systems of Thought " delivered in Indian universities in 1989.

Herodotus, Plato and Aristotle emphasized the Greek debt to Egypt. Solon, Thales, Lycurgus and others owed much to the Egytians. According to Philostratus of the 2nd century A.D., Pythagoras was a recipient and transmitter of Egyptian, and possibly ultimately, of Indian wisdom. The Egyptians, Plutarch wrote, liked Pythagoras very much. Pythagoras was the inventor of the word " philosophy ", and to have considered the philosophic attitude as that of a " mere spectator " at the Olympic Games, who was not motivated by deriving any profit thereby. Isokrates considered Egypt the most blessed land and insisted that philosophy was and could only have been a product of Egypt. Plato did not try to hide Egyptian origins of numbers, arithmetic, geometry and letters, language and science (*Phaedrus*, *Philebus*). His *Republic* resembles Isokrates' *Bousiris*, and is based on the Egyptian political model. The division of labour in Plato's work was, according to Marx, " merely an Athenian idealization of the Egyptian system of castes ". (*Capital*, trans. by E. & C. Paul with G.D.H. Cole's Intro, Vol. I, pt. 4, p. 299.) Aristotle studied under Eudoxus of Knidos who studied mathematics and astronomy in Egypt. In the *Metaphyics* Aristotle attributed to the Egyptians the invention of all the mathematical arts as well as the caste system.

S. Radhakrishnan in his *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* dealt with a number of instances of possible Western borrowings from India, and Needham in his great multivolume work of similar or even greater debt of the West to China. The vast and very deep influence which the West has exercised in the modern times on all the oriental countries is well-known. Today in most of the universities in the East, departments of philosophy teach only Western Philosophy ; whereas indigenous thought is taught, e.g. Confucianism, Buddhism and Hindu philosophy only in departments for them or in those of Oriental Studies and Languages.

I V

The scope of this paper does not permit discussion of why till Hegel those Europeans who knew Indian thought considered it philosophy, and why he claimed Greece to be the one and only homeland of philosophy. On the other hand, his contemporary Victor Cousin, a philosopher and a powerful French University man throughout the 19th century, in his lectures and book on General History of Philosophy pronounced Indian thought systems to be undoubtedly proper philosophy with vastness and depth.

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Both Hegel and Cousin read all that was available on Indian Philosophy in European languages. But in recent times both Husserl and Heidegger without ever having read a single scholarly work in Eastern philosophy dismissed it as non-philosophy. For them only in Greece philosophy originated and in Europe it developed, and according to the latter it produced modern science and technology, and it is going to end soon. Heidegger also asserted that only the German language, among the living languages, has the power to convey philosophical thoughts. All the German views mentioned in this paragraph are mistaken.

Similar parochial and erroneous views are held by a number of Indians, and very probably by others. There are, for example, many Indians, who advocate that Vedanta is the only philosophy which is perfect and deserves to be universally adopted, while others ought to be tolerated ; and their relative validity is determinable insofar as their doctrines and spiritual practices, if any, are in accordance with the Vedantic. Adherents of other Indian and non-Indian ideologies are not behind them in championing their own different systems.

No man can be without a philosophy, but everyone may not be conscious that he has one ; and not all philosophies may be clear, self-consistent and uncontradictable by common empirical experience and science. Even if a philosophy fulfils all these desiderata, it may be opposed to the profoundest and principal ethical insights of, say, Socrates Confucius, the Gita or the Bible. In such a case, I, for one, would hesitate to consider it good.

NAKED NATURE

A. PADMANABAN

With all doors and windows wide open
With the soothing breeze wafting along
With the aroma of fresh flowers scenting the scene
With the gay garden and the gyrating plants
doing delightful dance
With the dear company of guileless poets around me,
Let me live in a hut amidst verdure and Nature.
Let not concrete cubicle confine me
Let not closed doors cloister me
Let not shuttered windows stifle me
Allow me, my Lord, to see and enjoy Nature
in its form, true and wholesome,
Let its soft and cool breeze surround me
Let its verdant vitality invigorate me,
Let me see Nature in its nakedness,
it is pure beauty,
and in its pristine glory.

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GOLDING'S QUEST FOR MORAL VISION

K. SATAYANARAYANA

[William Golding, the Nobel Prize Winner, who has passed away very recently, was one of the leading fiction-writers of the post-war era with a penchant for originality, fertile imagination, ethical vision and study of the intricacies and inner workings of human nature. The following article is published as *Triveni's* homage to him. —Editors]

THE PRESENT STUDY seeks to examine William Golding's quest for moral vision as evidenced in his early novels, viz., *Lord of the Flies*, *The Inheritors*, *Pincher Martin*, *Free Fall* and *The Spire*. Golding is one of the most significant experimentalists among the contemporary British novelists. With the intensity of his moral vision and freshness of imagination he has provided a new impetus to the novel writing technique in the post-war era. Golding's novels are known for his incisive insight into human nature. He recognises the evil in man and yearns for man's redemption from it. What sets him apart from the rest of the contemporaries is his ability to convey his comprehensive view of man's existence through his fictional medium without ever becoming didactic. However, he has acquired the titles of " fabulist " and " myth maker " in the process of reconstructing certain myths as significant analogies for contemporary man.

Golding is very much aware of the far-reaching effects of the Industrial Revolution in the socio-political, economic, ethical structures in Europe and elsewhere in the world. The Age of Machine marked the beginning of the Age of Reason. The emergence of a new but powerful middle class, growing urbanization, increasing comforts, the growing sense of alienation, the neurosis of individualism together greeted the turn of the twentieth century. Traditional societies were found wanting in their accommodation of desires, tastes and comforts. A gradual, if not systematic,, demolition of the traditional societies is followed by a questioning of traditional, religious and philosophical systems. The rapid growth of science and technology has revolutionized the existing modes of

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living threatening to replace religion. Man has distanced himself from nature and God. He has created a spiritual vacuum.

As a novelist, Golding is very much concerned with the artificial patterns man has tried to impose upon the " natural chaos of existence. " He sets out to break down the false illusions of man about himself and the physical world in this sense. Golding is very much a religious novelist who is engaged in the task of resolving the moral choice between good and evil and man's relation to the universe and God. Much as he is concerned with the depravity of human condition, his religious sense does not drag him from the reality of human life but makes him observe and comment upon human fate with deep sympathy and compassion.

In Golding, the awareness of the futility of human existence in the face of wars has led to a comprehensive vision of human life. A sensitive writer, Golding feels the need to rescue man from self-destruction. Although he does not explicitly refer to war in his novels, it has shaken his faith in modern man and prompted him to search for a viable, harmonious and natural order. Having joined the Royal Navy in the second world war, Golding had close encounters with man's inhumanity to man. The nauseating experience of war cruelties made him realize the aggressive triviality of man's gigantic enterprises. This first-hand experience led him to probe into the mechanics of human mind and the validity of human existence.

Like a cultural primitivist, Golding derides the nihilistic and self-destructive tendencies of modern civilization. The intellectual awareness of the situation around him makes Golding feel like a pessimist but his moral idealism and the authenticity of his religious viewpoint leave the stamp of an optimist engaged in the art of creativity. Golding confesses :

> " I am by nature an optimist and by intellectual conviction a pessimist, I suppose. "

Golding's conviction in the ominous portents of human nature does not in itself make him a cynic or a pessimist. His moral insights are guided by a profound humanistic concern for the predicament of man. The unmistakable stamp of the novelist as a moral guide is evident in the fictional strategy of Golding in pointing out the folly of human nature without ever being lost in despair. A moralist's vision is always focussed on the future and in Golding's fiction a re-definition of the details of the human existence, by implication, becomes an act in defence of man. By nature and conviction Golding is an optimist, a " spiritual cosmologist." He recognises the complexity of human nature. He says :

> " I am very serious. I believe that man suffers from an appalling ignorance of his own nature. I produce my own view, in the belief that it may be something like the truth. I am fully engaged in the human dilemma but see it as far more fundamental than a complex of taxes and astronomy. "

Golding's moral vision distinguishes him from the post-war British fiction writers dominated by the neo-realism of Dorris Lessing, Kingsley Amis, Anthony Powell and C.P. Snow.

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Golding is concerned about the lack of understanding among men of their own nature. The choice for modern man is very limited forcing him into a world of success and comforts through devious means. He has opted for a society in which " it is better to be envied than ignored." Golding prefers to call this sort of dehumanization a sign of ignorance.

He questions the excessive reliance on the scientific and rational alone as an alternative to passion and violence. In fact, he seems to strike a balance between intellect and sentiment, reason and passion. He is not interested in the relationships of men in a given society or in the realistic portrayal of their response to the society. He goes beyond the conventional themes of contemporary novel and attempts to show how man looks like when shorn of artificiality and self-made patterns. He closely observes the inner working of a man struggling for survival, much like a metaphysical or an existential novelist. In *Lord of the Flies*, the passionate Jack and his group are pitted against the rational Ralph and Piggy. *The Inheritors* shows the rational means with which the new men developed new techniques and devices in their struggle for existence. *Pincher Martin* is doomed to self-destruction because of his passionate faith in himself. *Free Fall* is concerned with the absurdity of human predicament and man's rationality. *The Spire* shows how a man's commitment to his own reason and morals could ultimately turn out to be amoral and self-deceptive.

Golding does not set out for himself the sole task of finding the evil in man and searching the means to root it out in the manner of an altruist. He analyses the motives of human behaviour, the futility of man's rationality of passion and the question of good and evil in a carefully planned setting and action of the human mind. In whatever he does, he does not lose the touch of sympathy, compassion and humanism. The task he has set for himself is made clear in his own words :

> " I'm not saying anyone is evil. I set out to discover whether there is that in man which makes him do what he does, that's all." (Sameul Hynes, 34).

Golding deals with the inner chaos of man to explain the outer world of social behaviour. He believes in the Christian faith that man is a " fallen creature " shattered by " original sin." But he does not confine himself to the religious implications of the concept of Original Sin. Life, for Golding, has to be grasped with all that is dark and inexplicable in human nature. His profound awareness of " mankind's essential illness " is worked and re-worked in almost all his novels. Simon in *Lord of the Flies* says, " There is a beast, but it is only us." Piggy questions " What are we ? Humans or animals or savages ? " In *The Brass Butterfly* Phonocles asks " What is wrong with man ? " to which his emperor replies " There is nothing wrong with man's intelligence. The trouble is his nature."

In Golding's view, contemporary man lacks vision. He insists upon the ignored religious dimensions of human experience. In his stress on the duality of human nature, he inevitably draws comparison with Graham Greene. Both of them are interested in the

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metaphysics of human behaviour. But in the clarity of his moral vision, in the task of exposing the image of man to man and in providing valid generalisation about the meaning of life, he stands apart from the rest of the English novelists. The authenticity of his moral viewpoint is marked by interpretation of human experience and strengthened by the belief that life, in spite of the experience of pain, horror and guilt, is worth living.

A novelist with a moral stance inevitably makes use of symbols and myths which are familiar or have sunk into the archetypal consciousness of the audience, primarily to enable the readers to understand his moral viewpoint. Golding's literary powers are manifest in the metaphorical structure that governs each of his first five novels. Whatever the action — the deserted boys of *Lord of the Flies* engaged in quarrels, conflicts and prejudices, or an excursion into the mind of man's anthropological antecedents in *The Inheritors* or a man clinging to a rock for survival in *Pincher Martin* — the massive symbolic structure is designed in such a way as to underline the significance of human life and experience. It is conceived in terms of religious symbolism and Christian faith.

II

Golding's first novel, *Lord of the Flies*, is a fable which deals with the story of a group of children isolated on an island. He presents his view of the human condition with a moral vision. The children typify all human beings with their feelings of love, hatred, pain and guilt. In the initial stages the children find the place a new-found paradise. But soon they fall back upon the blood-thirsty ways and primitive savagery of the adults. The " civilised " standards they impose upon themselves fall apart by their blood-lust. The beauty of earthly paradise grows stale and finally they leave behind " the burning wreckage of the island." The boys are afraid of the beast which haunts the island. Simon understands that " the beast " is the evil nature of man. He thinks in hallucination that the pig's head is the " lord of the flies ", the darkness or evil. But he is killed in a ritual hunt before he revealed the truth. Piggy is also killed by Jack when he tries to oppose the latter. Golding considers evil a product of man's consciousness. The boys tend to impose an order or pattern upon the vital chaos of their own nature and so they commit the error or sin. Their guilt is the price of evolutionary success. Golding's thesis concludes that the beast is man's inability to recognise his own responsibility for his self-destruction. The episode of Simon's confrontation with the totemic sow's head i.e., " Lord of the Flies " reveals us the beastly nature of the man. When Simon thought of the beast, he felt " the picture of the man at once heroic and sick ". P. Ralph, at the end of the novel, weeps for the death of his friend Piggy, for the loss of innocence and humanity.

Golding's second novel *The Inheritors* is concerned with man's loss of innocence. The pride of modern man who imagines that he is in complete control of his own destiny is attacked. It attempts to reveal the absurdity that lies under the facade of " civilisation." It relates the story of Neanderthal man, the last family of man's ancestors, conquered by man. Man and his future are measured in terms of the Neanderthal man and his past when

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man was evolving from his ape-like predecessor. The protagonists of the novel, " The People " or Neanderthal men are neither apes nor human beings. Our knowledge of them is scanty. They are immediately followed by *homo sapiens*, an advanced race in evolutionary scale like the modern man. The primitiveness of " the people " is difficult to imagine. They constitute a small Neanderthal tribe which is already on the decline. They are not even a dozen altogether — Mal, the old man, the old woman, Ha, Lok, the protagonist,.Fa, Lok's woman companion, Liku, the little child and Nil, the mother of the new one. They live together like a family but their relationships are not defined. But we can assume from their deep affection that Liku is Lok and Fa's child and Mal and the old woman are Lok's parents. " The people " are not only innocent and harmless but also incapable of understanding evil. They run to meet their killers in love and they are incapable of preserving themselves. " The people " get extinct consequently and the new men, who are intelligent or strong, become the inheritors. The story does not end with the extinction of " the people." We see the events through the consciousness of Tuami who is one of the new men. At the end, Tuami and his people are left in darkness. As they are found to be sinners, they have to travel towards a line of unending darkness. Tuami sees the world as " dark amid the light ... untidy, hopeless and dirty." Golding makes man face the sad fact of his own cruelty and lust once again. While Golding makes Neanderthal men victims of *homo spaians* in *The Inheritors*, human beings become the targets of nuclear was in *Lord of the Flies*. Golding is of the opinion that the world is contaminated with the evil nature of modern man and that man struggle in all ages to rescue himself from that evil which is born out of his own absurd behaviour.

Pincher Martin deals with the fall of man and it describes a man's struggle for survival in the face of alien nature. Christopher Martin, a naval officer is blown into the Atlantic when a submarine attacks his ship. Fighting the water, he eventually finds the surface of a rock. Convinced of his intelligence he organises his routine on the rock. All his rational efforts fail as he is forced toward death and damnation. Pincher Martin's predicament is shown in micro-cosmic imagery to emphasise the fact that the real meaning of the novel lies in spiritual torment and self-awareness. In the first chapter he is seen trying to kick off his sea boots to avoid drowning. But on the last page it is made clear that he was drowned before he had time to kick them off. The whole action of the novel takes place in a few seconds of his actual drowing or perhaps in an after death stage. Golding dramatises " a modern ego " which has no belief in " purgatory." Martin's confrontation with the facts of his selfish life is the only hell he has to experience. Pincher admantly refuses the validity of spiritual expeirence. He believes the only hope for humanity is self-knowledge attained and practised by the individual. Pincher symbolises the entire humanity.

Golding's fourth novel, *Free Fall* is anchored in social surroundings but it also deals with the illusion that man can control his world rationally. The myth of " Free Fall " is central to all

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Godlign's novels. The fall of Sammy Mountjoy, again, is the fall from innocence. Unlike Martin, Sammy realises his guilt and yearns for divine grace.

Guilt-ridden Sammy traces his career in a flashback. Sammy Mountjoy is an artist at Tate's gallery. He spends his childhood days with his mother in Rotten Row, a rural slum locality. As he grows up, he develops artistic talent and asserts himself. He seduces a quiet girl, Beatrice Ifor and deserts her for Taffy. Thereafter he goes to Europe as an Official war artist and becomes a prisoner of war camp. He is subjected to interrogation and torture by Dr. Halde in a dark cell. Suffering makes him contemplate on human relationships. He recalls his own past deeds and realises his guilt to Beatrice. After his release, he searches for Beatrice and finds her in a lunatic asylum. Appalled by her destruction and inability to identify him Sammuy is left with deep remorse. He is now in search of a pattern " which will give experience, moral coherence." He desparately tries to locate the moment of his fall. He says :

I am looks for the beginning of responsibility, the beginning of the darkness, the point whee I began.

The frantic search takes his memory back to the stage of his seduction of Beatrice. Sammy Mountjoy is a sorry specimen of the human predicament but unlike Pincher he is not condemned to self-destruction. The saving grace of Sammy Mountjoy lies in his belated realisation.

The Spire, golding's fifth novel, tells the story of Jocelin, Dean of a cathedral and his inspired dedication to the erection of a crowning four-hundred-foot spire. The story is set in the Middle Ages and told in Jocelin's point of view. Jocelin has a vision of God asking him to built to highest spire. He takes up this work with the financial support of his aunt, Lady Alison who is the king's mistress. Jocelin is appointed dean at her request. He involves other people — Roger Mason, the master builder, Pangall, the cathedral servant and his wife Goody Pangall besides the " army " of workers. As the workd progresses, they are confronted with the porblem of inadequate foundations. However, the spire is erected but it claims the " blood and sin of the world." Jocelin regrets :

I never guessed in my folly that there would be a new lesson at every level and new power.

The massive enterprise involves heavy cost — physical, material and spiritual. The obsession of one man, even if it was thrust upon him by God, becomes a nightmare for the persons engaged in the construction of the spire. The construction is started without proper foundations. The persons in the divine task commit adultery, sin, murder and guilt. Joceline remains a silent witness to all this but refuses to give up his vision in spite of the evil surrounding the holy place. As he pushes on with his ambition, he is forced to come to grips not only with external factors, but his own internal forces. The progress of the construction with its own pitfalls also marks the progress of understanding that is the chief movement in he novel. Jocelin comes to understand his own past, his motives and his connivance with the evil. The novel, much as it deals with human will, is full of para-

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doxes. The foundation of the massive construction is fragile and yet the spire stands. The divine place, the physical and mental states are in confrontation with the evil. The fainal paradox is the unresolved tension between Joceline's blindness versus his visionary capabilities.

DANCE

LAXMI NARAYAN MAHAPATRA

The dance draws to its close,
wake up, O' children, it is time to sing again,
to play and sport

Night sprawls
winding like a dark lane
and there drum beats echo
to the rhythm of tinkling anke-letter
Some sweet voice lulls
the thirsty consciousness to sleep;
touch seeks to touch of a body;
dream break ; eyes look wine-red
with thirsty wishes yet unsated;
dreams drop and rip from
grape-red lips - this is the music
of thirst like a girls stripped bare.

Wake up, childen; it is time
to be fulfilled.
Dream flutters unfurled
like the thin silk robe of a girl
like a screen on the window of the night;
Stars gleam on the blue pane of the sky,
The palace keeps dancing;
in the silence memory gets lost,
the past is only a lapse.

The dance hall is a vaoid now,
children, wake up;
the least rhythm of th dance
is only an echo in the empty cup
smearing the dark shut of the night.

(Translated from Oriya by the poet)

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RADHAKRISHNAN AS AN INTERPRETER OF THE WEST

DR. D. ANJANEYULU

[Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was born on 5 September 1888, and died in 1975.]

WHEN WE TALK OF THE EAST and the West, we are easily reminded of Rudyard Kipling's famous (or is it infamous) lines :

" Oh, East is East, and West is West,
and never the twain shall meet.
Till earth and sky stand presently
at God 's great judgement seat ; "

But most people seem to stop with these two lines, which are obviously in keeping with the reputed jingoism of a poet of the Empire, who deserves better at the hands of his Indian readers. For they are largely unaware of the following few lines, which provide the corrective and show him in a better light :

" But there is neither East nor West,
Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
when two strong men stand face to face,
though they come from the ends of the earth ! "
(*The Ballad of East and West*)

Let alone the strong men coming from the ends of the earth facing each other. What about ordinary men and women, from the centre and the circumference, and all other parts of the earth in our own day, on the threshold of a new century ?

Anyway, what exactly do we mean by the terms " East " and " West " ? Do we mean the geographical " East " and " West " ? In which case, they can only be relative and not absolute. England, France and Germany are the " West " in relation to Russia and the other countries of Eastern Europe. Russia is the " West " in relation to India and China ; and India is " the West " in relation to Burma. And what was the " Middle East " (from the European angle) is now " West Asia ". Europe is, in fact, no longer the continent (which it was, in relation to England, the British Isles), but a peninsular projection of the land mass known as Asia.

The geographical factor may no longer be that important, when the world has almost become a global vil-

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lage because of the undreamt of advancement of science and technology, of transport and communications. Then, do we mean the cultural West or the philosophical West ? Even these cannot be put in water-tight compartments.

There were, and still are, some poets and writers from the distant West, who tend to romanticise the exotic East, with its sentimental associations. Here too, good old Kipling seems to come in with his flair for picturesque fancy. He says in his poem " Mandalay " :

> " Ship me somewhere east of Suez
> where the best is like the worst,
> where there ain't no Ten Commandments
> an' a man can raise a thirst ;
> For the temple bells are calling ;
> an it's there that I would be ....
> By the old Moulmein pagoda,
> looking lazy at the sea. "

Radhakrishnan's comment on these lines is worth noting. "Of course, the temple bells mean to the Burman the exact opposite of what they mean to Kipling ; be still, not to raise a thirst ".

The traditional antithetical stereotypes of the " spiritual " East, with the accent on Tradition and the " materialist " West, with the distinction of " modernity " may no longer be as relevant or meaningful now, as they used to be.

Before going into the subject of Radhakrishnan's interpretation of the West and its thought pattern and value system, it would be useful to take note of his own understanding of and introduction to these terms. He says : " When we take a long view of history, we will find that there is *not* an Eastern view which is different from the Western view of life. There is *not* much truth in the pseudo-science of national or continental psychology which affirms that all Easterners are this and all Westerners are that. The history of any people is slightly more complicated than these sweeping statements would suggest. As a matter of fact, Eastern and Western people had common beginnings and developed from them relatively independent views and acquired certain features which marked them from each other. Today both of them are tackling the same problem, the reconciliation of the values of mind with those of spirit. The tension between the two constitutes the meaning and purpose of history. Whether in the East or in the West, we have unresolved contradictions and attempts to solve them, to learn from each other and adapt the inheritance of the past to new and ever changing conditions and reshape it into a new and living pattern..... "

After making it clear that geographical areas are not cultural or anthropological entities, Radhakrishnan observes that what is known as " Western Culture " derives its values and institutions from Greece, Rome and Palestine.

He it is who was the author of the brilliant epigram that European or Western culture was a product of Greek thought, Roman Law and Christian religion. Expatiating on it, he said that while Greece gave critical spirit, methods of observation and political concepts, Rome contributed secular laws and principles of organisation and Palestine imparted to it monotheism and the concept of man as a moral being, subject to the commandments of God. To the result that thought, action and faith are the three

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component elements of the Western tradition.

Though for the Greeks of the fifth century BC, East or Asia meant Persia and West or Europe meant the Hellenic world, some similarities in ideas and images suggest that the ancient Greeks and Vedic Indians must have been in some kind of communication with each other. Areas of agreement are noted between the teaching of the Upanishads on the nature of reality and the Eleatic doctrine, between the Samkhya teaching and the views of Empedocles (of Etna) and Anaxagoras. These conclusions might have been reached independently by the Greeks as well as the Indians. Even more so between the ideas of Plato and the insights of the Upanishadic seers. In *Phaedo*, Plato gives a vivid account of the life eternal and the *Philosophia perennis* :

" When the soul returns into itself and reflects, it passes into another region, the region of that which is pure and everlasting, immortal and unchangeable ; and feeling itself kindred thereto, it dwells there under its own control and has rest from its wanderings, and is constant and one with itself as are the objects with which it deals ".

It was in Plato that the myotic tradition, based on the orphic view that the soul is immortal, finds its full expression. It had also enriched the thought of pythagoras. Even Socrates was probably aware of the supernatural world and felt himself a member of the heavenly city. The world might kill but it has not the last word.

According to Radhakrishnan's way of understanding, Socrates perhaps accepted the Orphic view that the soul is immortal and that happiness means the achieving of immortality by renunciation of the world, and that all men are brothers, whatever their conditions be.

But by and large, what distinguished the Greeks as a whole was their faith in the power of human reason, with a tendency to give rational justification for their religious and ethical views. Restructuring the field of human thought, with their dialectical minds, they chose to substitute the rational for the real and the scientific for the metaphysical.

While Greek Logos reflected an awareness of proportion, harmony and measure, which found expression in Greek art and aesthetics, rationalism, humanism, and civic virtues characterised their personal philosophy and political organisation.

Alexander the Great commands the admiration of Radhakrishnan not by the magnitude of his military campaigns but by the wide horizons of his mind, especially his lofty aspirations—for the brotherhood of man and the marriage of East and West in a world religion which would include in itself the best of all faiths. His prayer for peace, that all men should live together, in unity of mind and heart (homo-noia) has a futuristic ring.

Whether Christianity is an Eastern religion in terms of geographical origin or a Western religion in terms of later growth and ultimate development, Radhakrishnan feels that by the time of Jesus, the Jews knew something of the doctrines and practices of the Hindus.

The temptations of Jesus remind us of the temptations of Nachiketa by Yama (in the *Kathopnishad*) and those of Gautama the Buddha by

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Mara. The life and teaching of Jesus, with its element of divine incarnation rationalised by Greek Logos, and the ascetic note, and the mystic undertone, so distinctive, cannot be regarded as only a natural development of Jewish and Greek ideas.

Noticing a similarity in the pattern of development of many religions, of the East and the West, Radhakrishnan thinks that Christianity could not have won its way, if it had not found an echo in the religious teachings and beliefs of the time. He concludes that Christianity developed in the same world and breathed the same air as Alexandrian Judaism, Gnoticism and Neo-Platonism.

The growth of authoritarianism, along with the power of the church, was, in due course, accompanied by the primacy of conformism and intolerance of heresy and dissent. While Gibbon talks in general of the high place of intolerance among the monotheistic and proselytising religion, Christianity, which has since learnt its lessons was no model of tolerance in the middle ages, when heretics were burnt at the stake. Nor was Hinduism, for that matter, in the sectarian feuds within its own fold, in the medieval period.

Islam, in its early days, was not so intolerant, as it became later, admitting that the Jews and the Christians had received a partial revelation. Steven Runciman, an authority on "*The Crusades*" writes :

> " Seen in the perspective of history, the whole crusading movement was a vast fiasco... The savage intolerance shown by the crusaders was answered by growing intolerance among the Muslims. "

The basis of the medieval intellectual achievement was the reconquest of human thought. Humanism, the rise of the natural sciences, the discovery of the new world and the Reformation were some of the chief results of the Renaissance. The interests and passions of the Reformation and counter-Reformation, predominantly religious, led to the loss of universal loyalty and the rise of the spirit of nationalism which had infected the whole world.

The Protestant Reformation encouraged the scientific temper in the study of nature as well as the attainment of religious ends. Greater changes in all the sciences took place in the period between the 15th and 17th centuries than in the millennium before. During the 18th century, the Age of Enlightenment and the Age of Reason, English science was mainly experimental, while French science was theoretical. The philosophical idealism of Germany, especially of Fichte and Hegel, led to the abandonment of a sense of mystery and increased confidence in human reason. The 19th century may be treated as the first century of the scientific age, and its thinkers accepted the unity of the natural order and treated man as part of that order, subject to laws and limitations.

There has been a change or a falling off in the status of philosophy. While the task of science is accepted as that of giving information about the universe, the function of philosophy is recognised only as analysis and clarification, at best, not systematic account or sustained interpretation of the universe. But the contrast between Greece and Galilee, between mind and spirit remains unresolved.

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Strangely enough, Western dominance sowed the seeds of its own disintegration ; and the impact of Western culture on Asian society has become the basis of Asian nationalism and solidarity. The rise of new powers in Asia – China, India, Pakistan, etc., is seen to be the most important event of the Second World War. The advance of technology is another.

Talking of East-West relations now, the reference is no longer to the Orient and the Occident in religion or philosophy, or culture, not Asia and Europe in power politics, but the political-ideological East and political-ideological West of Europe itself, with America thrown in, with the latter. Communism may be identified with Eastern Europe, but its pedigree can be traced to Plato and the New Testament, Recordo and Adam Smith as well as Hegel, Marx, Engels and Lenin. (These remarks were made long before the disintegration of Soviet Union and the reverses of communism.)

The Semetic religions are treated together by Radhakrishnan – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. While recognising the partial validity of the first two, the last regards itself as realizing perfectly what they realize only in part and imperfectly. He observes :

" Militant and inelastic, Islam frames the same dogmas, prescribes the same laws, upholds the same constitution and enforces the same customs. It borrowed its idea of Messiah from Judaism, its dogmatism and asceticism from Christianity, its philosophy from Greece and its mysticism from India and Alexandria ".

He also feels that the dogmatism of Islam is toned down in India. He wrote these words in the early Fifties, when fundamentalism had not received the impetus that it has since, from the unearned affluence of the oil-rich Arab world.

As a resourceful interpreter and a radical optimist, Radhakrishnan observed in the chapter on " The Meeting of Religions " (from *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*) :

" Owing to a cross-fertilization of ideas and insights, behind which lie centuries of racial and cultural tradition and earnest endeavour, a great unification is taking place in the deeper fabric of men's thoughts. Unconsciously, perhaps, respect for other points of view, appreciation of the treasures of other cultures, confidence in one another's unselfish motives are growing. We are slowly realizing that believers with different opinions and convictions are necessary for others to work out the larger synthesis, which alone can give the spiritual basis to a world brought together into infinite oneness by man's mechanical ingenuity. "

After coming to this conclusion, Radhakrishnan draws attention to the brief statements, quoted in Basil Mathews' *Road, to the City of God* :

" We give religious systems separate names, but they are not separate : they are not closed globules. They merge in the universal human faith in the divine being ".

Non-Hindu and Western thinkers might be justified in seeing here a typically Hindu philosophical approach to religious belief, finding expression in the Rig Vedic maxim :

(The truth, or the essence, is one ; only wise men speak of it differently.)

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They might be tempted to ask the question – If truth is one, why then should wise men, if indeed they are wise, speak of it differently ? Are they all really wise or otherwise ?

Commenting on Radhakrishnan's conception of the relation between Eastern and Western cultural values, Professor F.S.C. Northrop writes that Radhakrishnan's tolerant attitude towards cultures, doctrines and religions other than his own does not have the 'quite world-centred rather than Hindu oriental culture-centered basis that he assumes. It is instead a consequence of applying to the rest of the world the standards defined by the epistemology and specific philosophy of oriental culture.

He points out that in Western science and philosophy, there are doctrines which are real contradictories. To accept Einstein's physics entails a rejection of certain assumptions in Newton's physics. Similarly, to accept Newton's physics entails a rejection of certain doctrines of Aristotelian physics.

He argues that the new scientific method of the West is that of indirectly verified, deductively formulated, theory where the postulates of the deductively formulated theory, refer not to the entities and relations given inductively with immediacy, but to theoretically designated, directly unobservable, entities and relations.

Professor Northrop says in contemporary Mathematical Physics there are at present at least two theories — the one termed " Relativity Theory ", the other " Quantum mechanics ", which are mutually contradictory.

There are certain directly-inspectible facts for which only the relativity theory accounts. There are other immediate data explained only by Quantum mechanics.

Neither theory, therefore, is capable of taking care of all the facts.

Competent mathematical physicists like Einstein and Dirac know that in such a situation, the only solution is the construction of a new theory which takes care of both sets of facts without contradiction, e.g. Einstein's Unified Field Theory.

The other method is to drop the basic assumptions of both of the present theories and introduce thoroughly novel assumptions which, without logical contradiction, account for all the facts explained by the present mutually contradictory theories.

To which Radhakrishnan replies :

" Even if Northrop's view is correct, scientific hypotheses are arrived at by a process of trial and error and cannot, therefore, be regarded as possessing absoluteness or finality. Freedom from the spirit of dogmatism is the characteristic of the scientific temper. Northrop himself cites how, in mathematical physics, we are adopting two contradictory hypotheses, the Relativity theory and Quantum mechanics. From Northrop's argument it follows when propositionalised conceptions turn out to be self-contradictory, then ideological conflict is the result ".

The believer in a dogma must burn the heretic. It is essential that proportional forms must be treated as working hypotheses and not as final truths. The periods when proportional forms were treated as of absolute authority were not the ages of progress, said Radhakrishnan.

In Kant's words, perceptions without conceptions are blind and

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conceptions without perceptions are empty. It is a question of more and less, and not of either or. Therefore, it is possible, as Northrop hopes, to achieve a truly world society in which the two sets of values derived from the two modes of knowing can be reconciled.

To strive for a peaceful settlement is not to appease. Democracy believes in freedom of the spirit, in the principle of toleration, which is not exclusively Indian. History will hold us responsible if we throw the world into flames in our fanatic zeal for our way of life.

In conclusion, Radhakrishnan says : " Whether we like it or not, we live in one world and require to be educated in a common conception of human purpose and destiny. " We need, according to him, not merely a closer contact between East and West but a closer union, a meeting of minds and a union of hearts. He is confident that the separation of the East and West is over and the history of the new world, the one world, has begun. ●

A FALLEN FLOWER

PROF. V. GOPINATH

Man never tries to learn
The anguish of a fallen flower ;
Alas ! he never can grasp
The sorrow of the petals falling.
Even the poet of yore who sang
of the bird pierced by the shaft,
Never bothered he of nature
And her thousand wails of grief.
All around you flowers fall
Almost every hour, every day :
But man heedeth not, he passes
on and on, unheeding and unfeeling.
Oh ! man can't weep if he wilt,
Nay, he shrouds his grief in laughter,
Loud laughter that conceals
Many a woe and plaintive wailing.
Meanwhile, the flower gathers dust,
It disintegrates, becomes one with earth
Ah ! Is man's lot different from this ?
"From dust Thou art and unto dust Thou returneth ! "

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THE GOLDEN MEAN

MOIN QUAZI

Rumi told us :
Life has to be an amalgam
An equal measure of body and spirit
Do for life now and hereafter
Like the village girls
Who dance their way in endless tattle
but won't let the water pitcher rattle.

Buddha preached :
The true path of life is the Middle Path
Neither asceticism nor affluence.

The Greeks proclaimed :
The real philosophy lies in a golden mean
Neither too much nor too little.

The village girls sang :
Don't strike the strings too hard
for they will break
Nor keep them too loose
That they won't respond.

Who will show me the border
which divides the two worlds ?

THE SAGE OF KANCHI

B. RAMAMURTHY

A century of glorious years
An unparalleled life of purity and greatness
Propagating Vedic tradition from the top of a mountain
His knowledge of scriptures and ancient love is an ocean
To all the world, the flag of Indian culture is unfurled aloft
By the Jagadguru Sage of Kanchi Mutt.

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THE INDIAN POLITICAL SCENE

MAMIDIPUDI PATTABHIRAM

THE MOST OUTSTANDING EVENT in the past three months in a political sense is the Union Government's resolve through legislation to separate religion from politics. Whatever be the motivations of the ruling party, the objective is good and, therefore, should be welcomed. The Indian Constitution does guarantee individual and corporate freedom, citizenship rights and so on and the State is not constitutionally connected with any particular religion either. Nor does it seek to promote or interfere with it. Of course, there seems to be a difference of opinion as to whether the Indian State has been neutral, particularly with reference to Hinduism as is expected of a secular State. This indeed is the crux of the problem. It is hardly necessary to doubt the avowed intentions of the Indian Government to be secular. There are those who believe that the country is already secular and, therefore, there is no need for legislative enactments to secure this ideal. It is only when communal riots break out — and these have been frequent and even regular — that people are shocked into the realisation that secularism is just an ideal and much needs to be done to realise the objective.

The tendency is to seek external causes for the communal riots in the country. In a sense this cannot be avoided because foreign agencies are in fact seeking to provoke widespread communal disaffection. The evidence of such activity is clear enough in Kashmir, for instance, but what is disturbing is the possibility of riots breaking out elsewhere as a result of covert operations of subversive elements acting at the behest of their patrons across the border. It would be a mistake, however, to blame the external agencies alone for fomenting trouble. There is little doubt that much of the responsibility for the growing communal tension devolves on certain political parties, more especially, the BJP and its surrogates. Of course, it is not fully justified to blame the BJP either, for it is also true that in States ruled by the Congress (I) party communal riots have indeed been taking place. Such outbreaks appear to have been due more to weak and corrupt administrations than any direct encouragement. The point that requires to be stressed is that secularism secured by the Constitution is held by certain sections as not being an adequate safeguard against a possible disastrous future. The

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Ayodhya incidents of last December amply prove this. Hence the attempt to delink religion from politics so that those who come to rule do not make use of religion to win seats in the legislatures and Parliament.

The constitutional mandate is a secular democracy with every citizen is free not only to practise but also to propagate the religion of his choice as long as he does not infringe the rights of others. In theory at least abuse of religion is not permitted for political purposes but every political party without exception has been guilty of the abuse. If the Congress (I) has been placating the minority community, as many people seem to think, for obtaining their votes, the BJP, especially, is harping on Hindutva for the same purposes. Hence there really is no difference in the actions and pursuits of the two national parties. India committed itself to secularism and democracy since Independence. Forty-five years later the people are being reminded that they should strive for secular ideals. This is the tragedy of the situation. Communalism continues to be a political force although it is loudly proclaimed that secularism is a priceless heritage of the country and is the foundation on which a progressive modern State could be built for the welfare of the common man. The proposed legislation to delink religion from politics is based on the resolve to consolidate national integration based on secularism as a necessary condition for the country's march towards democratic socialism. Yet the measure is faulted because people see it as primarily a device to harm one single party, namely, the BJP, which did very well in the polls in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. There is a feeling that if fresh elections are held in these four States which form the Hindi hinterland, the BJP will come back to power. Thus unable to face the threat from the BJP politically, the Congress (I), the critics say, had sought to amend the Constitution for the 80th time. The Congress (I) leaders must have known that they were unlikely to muster the necessary two-thirds majority in Parliament but hoped for a propaganda victory after wasting a lot of time and the labours of a joint select committee. As has been already indicated, the proposed amendments are totally unnecessary for equal respect for all religions is a cornerstone of the Constitution and does not need reiteration. To attack religious symbolism while ignoring the poison injected into the people's minds is to say the least dishonest.

Obviously the Government is both unable and unwilling to atone for the wanton destruction at Ayodhya. The way to respond to the unfortunate developments in Ayodhya is not by seeking to eliminate inconvenient political parties by constitutional subterfuge. What needs to be done is to promote harmony between the major communities without adopting partisan measures for temporary political gain. One great strength of Hinduism is its lack of organisation. Hinduism has no common rituals, not even a commonly accepted body of scriptures. If it had made it easier for the State to bring about changes in the Hindu social customs in the absence of any organised opposition by the same virtue the Hindu society has proved to be remarkably resilient to any fundamental change. And yet mere legislation is not going to make any difference to the

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consciousness of the Hindus and social evils are bound to continue. A tradition-bound society of the kind which exists in India cannot be modernised overnight and it must be remembered that the Indian social tradition with its pronounced authoritarian undertones presents a real challenge to any social transformation on the lines of secularism and democracy. Delinking of religion from politics is thus a very difficult job that has to be undertaken not in a hasty manner. Penal provisions such as disqualification from standing for elections are not going to be of much help. People must have to be educated in the spirit of the Constitution and the battle against intolerance, bigotry and hatred which is in the minds of men will have to be fought while they are young and in school. Perhaps this is where the battle is being lost.

Equally important are the developments in regard to the democratic process in India. The Election Commission has been very much in the news with the Chief Election Commissioner taking decisions in an arbitrary manner boardering almost on whimsicality. This has to some extent vitiated the electoral process itself. First the by-elections which were announced for a certain day were postponed on the ground that the law and order situation in the States concerned would not have permitted holding of a free and fair poll. Later, the Chief Election Commissioner changed his mind and advanced the date of the elections but not before the matter was taken to courts. There was utter confusion and the healthy practice of not interfering with the elections, when once the process is set in motion, has been violated. There is a big debate going on in the country whether what the Chief Election Commissioner did was right or not. The CEC has been maintaining that he is the final authority in the matter of holding of elections and if he thought that there were indications that the poll exercise was going to be adversely affected by certain factors he was fully within his rights to seek and order postponement. There have been demands also for his removal by impeachment, as his critics feel that he has been misusing his constitutional authority. And to prevent him from resorting to arbitrary actions it has been suggested that the constitutional provision for a multi-member Election Commission should be invoked. But the point is that having a few more members is not going to alter the constitutional status of the CEC and he could still be as arbitrary as ever. The more pertinent question is how to discipline a Chief Election Commissioner who seems to think no end of his powers. An obstructionist CEC is a danger to the democratic system itself and ways and means must be found to secure his ouster if he wantonly distorts the constitutional provisions in the name of fair and free elections. All this is not to say that there are no electoral malpractices which need to be curbed. For instance by having trusted officials in key posts like that of returning officers, those in power hope to make up for the loss in their popularity. This is the worst form of electoral malpractice for it cuts at the very roots of both administrative impartiality and democratic principles.

Then there is the question of misusing official machinery during the poll. It is here the Election Commission has to play its part in an effective manner and there will be full public

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support for whatever positive action it takes to prevent misuse of official machinery for purely partisan ends. In India, unfortunately, progress and democratisation have come to be very closely identified with ethical regression. And the rot has set in at all conceivable levels. Soon it will become naive even to raise a murmur of protest against the cynical disregard of norms. The Chief Election Commissioner must, however, be commended for his advocacy of the electronic voting machine which will go a long way in curbing many of the malpractices that are witnessed today. Perhaps the most important advantage conferred by the machine is that it makes rigging impossible and would put an end to the complaints of irregularities and illegalities in counting that are now heard. The machine will also eliminate invalid votes, voting will be easier, quicker and smoother than now and it will be possible to declare the result of the elections within minutes of the end of the polling. Saving will be effected in a number of other ways also : in paper and printing, in the number of polling personnel deployed and in vehicles used to transport ballot papers and boxes.

Considering all these advantages it is surprising that the Government is yet to make up its mind on the use of the voting machines. It is to be hoped that the Election Commission will now make strenuous efforts to convince every political party of its usefulness and if need be effects suitable alterations in it in order to allay apprehensions unjustified though they may be.

There are several other directions in which the electoral reforms could be carried out. There is need to curb the influence of money and muscle power, prevent collusion between the police and their political patrons and so on. The measures taken so far like cancelling elections, ordering a repoll or posting the Election Commission's own men as observers have not made much difference. Nor such legal steps will mean anything so long as the Government's political will is absent. The Union Minister for Law and Justice has told Parliament that the subject of electoral reforms would be discussed with all political parties and one hopes that there will be a serious effort to improve the system.

Not everything is rosy on the States front. Taking Andhra Pradesh, the acceleration of naxalite activity is a matter for some concern. The State Government has not been able to contain their depredations nor has it given much thought to the law and order problem created by the extremists. It is surprising that an organisation which has been banned is able to carry on its murderous activities without let or hindrance as it were. Earlier efforts to bring the youth who have been joining the movement back to the national mainstream have yielded no results and it is up to the Government to apply its mind seriously. The point is that unless the naxalites have the cooperation of the locals they would not be in a position to thrive and it is, therefore, necessary to go deep into the problem and find out why they get support at all. Possibly lack of employment opportunities induce the young men and women to take to the gun in a moment of desperation. Insurgency has also been on the increase in the north east States and the Centre has to intervene on a big way to ensure

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that it does not spread. Political instability is also on the increase in some of the States as for instance in Karnataka. The ruling Congress (I) with a massive majority is not in a position to ensure a clean government mainly because the Chief Minister is under constant threat of being dislodged because of dissidence in the party. Ultimately it is the people that suffer but perhaps the politicians could not care less.

Similar is the position in Tamil Nadu where there is total confrontation between the ruling AIDMK and its one time partner the Congress (I). The Chief Minister is under constant pressure and fear is put into her that her government will be dismissed any time. With a big majority she is unable to concentrate on administration and there is no governance worth the name – all because it has become a question of survival for her. In Kerala again the ruling party is in utter disarray with the Chief Minister shuttling between New Delhi and the State capital. The situation in the other States is no better and the most surprising factor is the turn of events in West Bengal. The CPI (M), which has been ruling the State for almost two decades, is showng signs of cracking up. Mr. Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister, is facing some opposition from within as could be seen from the resignation from the Cabinet of Mr. Buddhadev Bhattacharjee who was at one time regarded as next only to the Chief Minister. All in all a depressing picture. Yet one would conclude with the words of Lord Bryce who said no Government demands so much from the citizen as democracy and none gives so much back. Any free people that has responded to the call of duty and has come out of a terrible ordeal unshaken in courage, undimmed in vision with its vital force still fresh and strong need not fear to face the future.

LONGEST AND THE SHORTEST JOURNEY

DR. NARENDERPAL SINGH

Journeys took hours, days or years
back
in the days past
some consumed several of them
full of tribulations and fears.

But the journey as long as
a whole lifetime
is the shortest.

Journey from life to death
is just one rankling breath

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SHELLEY AND BHARATHIDASAN AS FEMINISTS

DR. V. AYOTHI

ROMANTIC AGE PREVAILED in England in the beginning of the nineteenth century and in India from the birth of the twentieth century. Most of the Romantic poets of both the countries, being products of their milieu, could not free themselves fully from the vital social problems. As a result, the Romantic Movement ceased to be a mere literary movement and the romanticists very much felt the need to change the conservative feudal set up which was allergic to new changes. They waged a relentless war against oppressors and identified themselves with the suffering proletarians. Wordsworth, Byron and Shelley supported the French Revolution hoping that it would bring liberty to mankind. Bharathi and Bharathidasan participated in the Indian Freedom Struggle cherishing the hope that it would result in political and domestic freedom. Thus the Romantic poets revolted not merely against political tyranny, but also against the social institutions which set bounds to the growth of humanity.

Women's liberation is one among the several aspects of their social concern. In the feudal set up of the society, women were not given equal rights and they were always considered to be inferior to men. Tyrants and landlords used them only as puppets in their harems to pacify their lust. In domestic life also they were considered to be creatures meant for bearing and rearing children. Hence, a new movement called " Feminism " was started in the European countries with the object of liberating womanhood. The Romantic poets like Wordsworth, Byron and Shelley also felt an urgent need to emancipate women from their enslavement. They started singing the doctrine of sexual liberty as if divinely inspired. Their literary works were dominated by women characters of new types who completely differed from the female characters depicted in the classical literary works.

The feminist movement in India grew very strong in the era of the Indian Freedom Struggle. Bharathi, Bharathidasan and Kavimani, the children of the Struggle and the Reformation Movement, also created a number of revolutionary women characters as champions and torch-bearers of the feminist movement and through them expressed their ideas about sexual equality more emphatically and clearly than their English counterparts. They

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never missed an opportunity to propagate their cherished ideals and optimistc vision about the role of women in the construction of a brave new world.

Edmund Blunden, Shelley's biographer, considers Cythna, the heroine of " The Revolt of Islam " as the first revolutionary woman in English poetry. She is the type that modern revolutions have made familiar, the woman in the heart of storm, at the head of the crowd, diffusing the joy of devotion. She feels equal of her man like Bharathi's " Modern Woman " and the several heroines of Bharathidasan. Cythna was rightly considered as a child of God, " sent down to save/Women from bonds and death ..." [" Laon and Cythna " IX : viii]. She educates the womenfolk and work with them for their liberty :

Thus she doth equal laws and justice each
To woman, outraged and polluted long ;
Gathering the sweetest fruit in human reach
For those fair hands now free
[IV : xxi]

Laon, the hero of the poem, emphasises the need for sexual equality in the following lines :

Never will peace and human nature meet
Till free and equal man and woman greet
Domestic peace ; and ere this power can make
In human hearts its calm and holy seat,
This slavery must be broken.
(II : xxxvii 11. 994-98)

He also asks a rhetoric question :

Can man be free if woman be a slave ? [II : x 1 iii. 1 : 1045]

In " Queen Mab " Shelley writes :

Woman and man, in confidence and love,
Equal and free and pure together trod
The mountain-paths of virtue ...
[9 : 11. 89-91]

Similar sentiments are expressed strongly by Bharathidasan in " Canciviparvathattin Caral " through the woman protagonist. Denying her lover Kuppan's chauvinistic attitude, the heroine Vanji asks,

Do you mean that women need no freedom of speech ?

Do you impeach the race of women as worse than dust ?

As a mouthpiece of the poet, Vanchi very emphatically remarks that mere political freedom would do no good if it is not clubbed with the liberation of women and if women are not treated as equals of men :

As long as women are enslaved here
Freedom of the nation will be
As impossible as capturing a unicorn ;
Till you treat women as dumb creatures
Men will only be like all-withdrawing tortoises
If women are made mere senseless dunces
The crops of the field [children] will also be like that.

His narrative poems like *Kudumba Vilakku*, *Pandian Parisu*,

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Kurinchi Thittu, *Kannaki Kappiam* and *Tamizhachiyin Kaththi* centre around heroic women characters who are in no way inferior to their male counterparts.

Bharathidasan is of the opinion that real liberation of women is possible only if they are educated. Through education, women can get social awareness, demand their rights and contribute their share in the making of a nation by shouldering all types of responsibilities like men. Education alone can, according to Bharathidasan, make women broad-minded. Therefore, he appeals to the parents to educate their children in several places in his works.

Uneducated women, due to ignorance, are mostly superstitious. Bharathidasan, who believes that real education begins at the cradle before a formal beginning is made at school, advises the mother to educate her children through meaningful and rational lullabies which will help them grow amidst a healthy environment with good thoughts. In his poem " Pen Kulanthai Thalattu " [Lullaby to the Female Child], he advises the female child to guard herself against the superstitious consciousness that prevails around her without any relevance to the practical life :

You are the light
Rush to dispel
The darkness of casteism
.....
They apply Kumkum to cowdung
And call it god !
Blush at this act and sleep
Laugh at them, close your eyes
and sleep.

In *Isaiamuthu*, the father of a little girl is shown to make his child realise the importance of education and therefore advises her to stop being a truant :

Having combed and decked your
head with flowers
" Go to school, dear " said your
mother
Why, like a statue do you stand
there ?
Why so much tears you shed ?
Can education be priced and
bought ?
By regular study alone could it
be got.
Isn't education the plantain of
mountain ?
Go my dear daughter and eat it
to your content.
If you remain uneducated,
I will be ridiculed by the people
of the town.
Run before the clock runs, my
dear
With the girls of next door.
It may be difficult for you to
learn now,
But the more you study the more
you will understand
Tamil Nadu, surrounded by
seas,
Demands, in love, women's
education.

[" Father to his daughter " in *Isaiamuthu*, I. p. 50.]

Women have to get educated first ; and then they must educate others, particularly their children. Today we find that only women are fit to teach children at the elementary level. Even at the level of higher education, women have already started playing a vital role like men.

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Shelley's revolutionary woman Cythna fights for the fulfilment of the following ideals : " The awakening of an immense nation from their slavery and degradation to a true sense of moral dignity and freedom ; the bloodless dethronement of their oppressors and the unveiling of the religious frauds by which they had been deluded into submission; the tranquillity of successful patriotism, and universal toleration of benevolence of true philosophy ". Shelley feels that the inner fire that enlightens her path of revolution will certainly guide her to success. Cythna's lover has kindled in her heart the sentiments of liberation and therefore she remarks :

When I go forth alone, bearing
the lamp
Aloft which thou hast kindled in
my heart ;
Millions of slaves from many a
dungeon damp
Shall I leap in joy, as the
benumbing cramp
Of ages leaves their limbs – no ill
may harm
Thy Cythna even–truth its
radiant stamp
Has fixed, as an invulnerable
charm
Upon her children's brow, dark
falsehood to disarm. "

[" Revolt of Islam " II. x l iv. 11 1052-62]

Cythna desires to make this earth more beautiful by clothing it with science and poetry.

To make this Earth, our home,
more beautiful,
And science, and her sister
poesy,
Shall clothe in light the fields
and cities of the free !

[V. 1 i. 5 11 2253-56]

Like several of Bharathidasan's women characters, Cythna stands for wisdom, truth, freedom and heroism who never fails to perform her domestic duties. Like Thangam, the heroine of *Kudumba Vilakku*, Cythna proves to be " the only source of tears and smiles " to Laon. When he talks about his wife Cythna, Laon says :

As mine own shadow was this
child to me
A second self, far dearer and
more fair ;

[II. xxiv 874-75]

.....she
Became my only friend, who had
endued
My purpose with a wider
sympathy ;

[II. xxxvi. 982-85]

Bharathidasan demands equal rights for women. They must have the right to speak ; the right to love ; the right to live freely without any constraints. Then only they can blossom into fully grown and perfect individuals. He does not approve arranged marriages. He feels that love between man and woman alone must be considered in determining the marriage. All other factors should not be allowed to spoil the life of youngsters. Bharathidasan specially appeals to the educated woman to be very bold and choose the right man as her life-partner :

Oh, the educated woman, to you
I would say :
Choose him whom you love as
your spouse !

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Even the horse kept in a lone stable
Has the right to neigh.
Why should a damsel blush and fear in her house,
Persuade your parents to the extent possible
With tears try to move their stone-like heart ;
If still denied justice, free yourself from their clutches !

Bharathidasan advises young woman to be obedient to her parents. If she is denied the right to choose her husband, she must try her level best to convince her parents and persuade them to accept her plea. However, if they still fail to concede her desire, she has no other option than to sever her relationship with them and get married with the man of her choice. He presents Amuthavalli [in " Purathikavi "], Poongothai [in *Ethirparatha Mutttham*] and Karkandu in a play with the same name as examples of bold lovers.

While Bharathidasan accepts love and marriage, Shelley advocates free-love. In his notes on "Queen Mab", Shelley emphatically says that "love withers under constraint ; its very essence is liberty ". Bharathidasan insisted on the need for marriage between a woman and man who love each other. But Godwin and Shelley considered the institution of marriage as a system of fraud. To them free-love, even at the risk of lust, is preferable. This concept of free-love goes against the very spirit of Tamil culture which adores a chaste woman. But Shelley remarks in his notes on "Queen Mab " that " a system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage ". He points out in " Episychidion " :

I never was attached to that great sect,
Whose doctrine is, that each one would select
Out of the crowd a mistress and a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion, though it is in the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary steps tread,
.....

[II. 149-55]

Narrow

The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
The life that wears, the spirit that creates
One object, and one form, and builds thereby
A sepulchre of its eternity.

[II. 170-75]

He even goes to the extent of saying that " chastity is a monkish and evangelical superstition ...; it strikes at the root of all domestic happiness ... " Bharathidasan is not prepared to admit this evil into ideal state. He considered chastity as a necessity to both men and women. He could never think of pre-marital and extra-marital relationship between men and women. He would not admit anything which would result in demoralization of the society.

His sincere and serious inquiry into the various problems of women needs to be discussed at length as

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they have not lost their relevance today. In his poems "Kulanthai Manatthin Kotumai " and " Kaimai Koduamai ", he attacks child marriage and widowhood. While a seven-year-old widow longs for the love of her father, the cruel father spends all his time on his second wife. The plight of the girl is realistically and pathetically portrayed. He considers widowhood as a symbol of the narrow-mindedness of the orthodox people. Like men, women also must have the liberty to remarry. His poems entitled " Kaimai Thuyar " and " Kaimai Neekam " elaborately portray the pitiable condition of widows – particularly young widows. " Mutat Thirumanam " deplores marriage between an old man and a young woman. He calls it a foolish system meant to trap and enslave young women. He calls it a marriage of two bodies and not two souls. If the souls of the married people are not united, of what use is that marriage ? He wants us to bury deep the social laws and traditions which permit such marriages.

The poem " Mutat Thirumanam " depicts the feelings of a young, beautiful and loving bride who awaits her aged husband to wake up who unmindful of her desires enjoys a sound sleep marked by running saliva and the sound of his snoring. Frustrated by such a meaningless life, the bride attempts to commit suicide. Such incompatible marriages naturally tend to become futile.

In his play *Karkandu*, the heroine very boldly escapes the accident of getting married with an old woman by boldly choosing a young street-singer as her husband. His " Puratchi Thirumanat Tittam " offers the readers an effective course in the procedure of rational marriages. [Vol. III. 21-219]

A woman character in " Mana Maratti ", decides to kill even her husband who, when reprimanded for his immoral life, attempts to murder her and kills their baby. She very boldly questions the validity of the law which is keen on punishing her for the murder. In the poem entitled " Penkalin Nilai " [The Plight of Women], Bharathidasan argues for equal right for women in property and wealth.

A typical ideal woman character of Bharathidasan, motivated by her interest in humanity, and guided by an awareness of her poverty and physical weakness goes to hospital for sterilization operation. Her resolution is an example of her rational thinking who will never submit herself to the existing meaningless taboos [Bharathidasan, " Karuttatai Maruttuvamanaiy Oruttiyin Ventukol " [*Thenaruvi :* Pumpuhar, 1978, p. 54.]

Bharathidasan and Shelley have depicted the plight of women with utmost sincerity. The ideals of feminism are spreading out far and wide under the auspices of several organizations and women are getting widely recognized as equals of men in every way. But in an underdeveloped country like India majority of women, particularly in the rural areas, have not risen up to play their right role in the society. Illiteracy is a great menace which confines women to unwanted traditional beliefs. Hence the bitter fact remains that women are not yet fully liberated. Women are still ill-treated and considered as inferior and dependent creatures and therefore they have certain peculiar problems in the society unlike the " happy-go-lucky "

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men. However, partaking of the prophetic frenzy of Bharathidasan and Shelley, we might conclude with the hope that the day on which free men and women would greet each other is not far away.

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MOTHER TERESA

JANASWAMI KODANDA RAMA SASTRY

A born sailor, thou art,
An ocean of mercy for all,
With purity in thy art,
Thou dost sweep sorrows away –
A diamond sparkling in the sky !

Oh Mother, thee, an axe on all sorrows,
A ray of unity, thou art,
Thou hast spread for brethren,
A drop of dew on tears, thou art ;

A bloom of reforms,
A war on poverty,
Battle for hungry, and starved,
A door of freedom for bonded souls
Heaven on earth for those whom you love ;

A garden of fruits with sweet mercy,
Thee, a goddess for the uncared for,
Thee a beacon of hope
A medicinal plant to this gloomy land,
Oh Mother, fill the world – with selfless service ;

Thee the goddess, and, the diamond,
Oh Mother, across the seven seas spread compassion,
And, thy service – by this land,
Thee, a Yogini of Nishkama Karma,
Thou hast spread thy Nirmal Hriday ;

Like a drop of dew on orphans,
Thee, a bloom of love and peace,
Touch of God on humanity, thou art,
Prop and succour for the parentless
Thee, a child of Albania, Thee a Mother of Bharat !

(Translated from Telugu by Rev. A. Muthaiah and J. Sambasiva Prasad)

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THE VIOLIN

(Short Story)

CHAGANTI SOMAYAJULU

[Translated from the original Telugu by " SRIVIRINCH "]

Rajyam was not conscious. Perhaps she was not in this world. Venkatappayya was aghast as he looked into her face intently and piercingly. Her lips quivering, she seemed to be trying to say a word or two but the voice failed her.

" Rajyam, Rajyam, " he was anxiously calling her but she did not respond. No, she was not in this world at all ! She was moving in the open skies humming the melodies of Thodi Raga — was what he could imagine.

Children were engaged in their play over the verandah of the house. What a nuisance you are ! Can't you ever keep silent ? " His voice was at its top adding to the annoyance he showed. If only the boys were anywhere nearer, he would decidedly slap them well.

" Oh, my lord, what makes you thunder over the childern ? " asked Rajyam awakened by his loud voice. A frown on her face, she looked at him in all irritation.

" How do you feel now, first tell me that."

" Why did you shout at the boys ? "

" That doesn't matter, first tell me about your health. "

" I'm all right, nothing happened to me. "

" All the time you were not responding to my inquiries. "

" I didn't notice. Were you talking to me ? "

" Yes, I was worried beyond a limit. "

" Was that so ? " Rajyam smiled pulling courage out of all her weakness. Eyes projecting out as an owl, the upper layer of teeth made a gruesome scene. " I went into deep sleep. That was all. " She again smiled to soothe the situation.

" Thank God ! That was that ! " Venkatappayya felt greatly relieved.

Rajyam was just then convalescing after a period of typhoid. It was only a week that she regained normalcy. That wretched typhoid sapped all her energy. These three weeks she was resembling only a corpse. She had

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a relapse too. All a hell of time. The days passed on horribly but uneventfully. She got back from the hospital after the second run. Yet Venkatappayya was not free from his own nervous psyche. Any moment, it was his guess, she would arrive at the vanishing point.

" I'm all right now, able to digest what I eat, having good and sound sleep. There is nothing to worry. After all this sickness could not be normal overnight. I must gradually slowly recover. You have a fancy for worrying over trifling matters. "

A look at Rajyam would make one wonder how life was still pulsating in that body with not a gram of flesh under the drying skin.

" When you didn't respond to my calls, I was very much upset, " said Venkatappayya. All these weeks it had become an unhappy routine for him. Looking at the sleep-covered reclining body, he would often wonder if she was alive at all. It had been a great exercise each time to make sure she was alive.

" I was musing, that's all. Moving to this place did us good. I was feeling reassured, " said Rajyam.

" Yes, I too reckon that factor. There is, decidedly, some added comfort. The rent, of course, is a bit high for us. "

" I'm equally worried on that point, " she said.

" Don't worry. Comfort is more important, not money, " assured Venkatappayya.

Earlier they were living in an old uninhabitable house, for a consideration of lower rent. All the family members were unwell. Rajyam narrowly escaped the death trap. Wife at hospital and with no domestic help, he had to take care of all chores by himself. Boys needed extra care, running round the hospital, medical shops, domestic duties of the kitchen — all this made him quail.

It was the luck and fortune of the husband and boys that saved her from the untoward, considering the severe attacks of the typhoid.

Now they leased to themselves a tiny portion of a new-built house. This has two rooms and a verandah. Opposite there was a nice looking palace. Lot of space around the houses here. Gardens were blooming all around.

" You don't bother about the money. We shall manage. It was great enough you regained normalcy, " he assured her.

" We can't be complacent that way, you must have spent a lot over my medicines and tonics. I wonder how you managed to secure the needed money. We have to think of it leisurely and replan our working. "

" Don't allow your mind to get filled with all sorts of thoughts. Take good care of yourself. That's all for the present. As the doctor said, eat well — drink ovaltine as many times as you can, consume the fruits all by yourself, need not share with the boys ever — take good rest all the time. "

" Yes, yes. It's all that I'am doing in the present. What else ? You labour in the kitchen and I relax like a queen here ! You must have run into debts for the money you spent. No other go for us. "

" Don't bother about that, Rajyam. You relax and let your mind not get into money-matters. "

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When these thoughts come up the surface, he too was upset. The wages and advances — all exhausted. Had to get hold of an extra two hundred bucks. Doctors didn't pester for money. But the treatment costed a lot. A government hospital, for that matter. Even then....

" I shall not think at all. We shall look into that later, I can manage, when I'm up. "

Venkatappayya slipped out of the room to end this current of thoughts. He refreshed himself and prepared to go out to bazaar. When he entered the room again, Rajyam was not appearing all right. Dusk was descending into the room. The evening twilight was brightening her face. Looking at her pointedly, now he didn't feel that bad. Perhaps she was reminiscing; her face was blissful enough.

It was years since he noticed her so abundantly happy. First year of their married life, she was an embodiment of activity and gleam. It was in the second year that she added the third member to the family. Life became all different. Six years of united living made her a mother of three childern. Moving with the ebbs and tides of life she somehow got adjusted to that.

Her lips were a bit apart now and the head was tilting to a side. Venkatappayya had an instant laugh. That grew into a whooping cough. This brought her back to normal senses letting go the musing part.

" What made you laugh ? " She demanded of her husband.

" Once again you keep your lips apart and tilt your head. Then muse. I shall tell you why I laugh. "

" Oh, you mean that ? Don't you hear the music from the other house ? "

He woke up to the music waves only then.

" So you were lost in music. Was that so ? Surely, you are a violinist, aren't you ? "

The waves now brought into the room the Kamavardhani Raga. A fragrant smell accompanied that.

" You boys, a music concert is going on. Come in and listen, " he alerted the childern. Boys jumped out paying all attention to that. " Thought this house is all right. Perhaps I have this migrain here, " he added.

" Get a native medicine *sonti*, " she said, as he felt a thrash of the mind and a burning sensation all over the body.

" Why do you need to go out now ; why can't we have an early supper, " she inquired.

" I have been whiling away the time. The sins have to be paid back, can't be postponed any further. "

" Oh, you too have been sinning ? "

" Life didn't spare me. "

The boys were following the music intently and perhaps enjoying that bounty.

The innocent minds of children do get absorbed in music very easily. If they be initiated into the Jnana of the music, their lives will become blissful and significant.

" Oh, you are the mother's sons. Music must have appealed to you, " so saying Venkatappayya moved off.

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Rajyam leisurely and laboriously got up and switched on the tube-light. It filled the room with bright light. These lights too gleam well in these good houses. It was in that old house, dilapidated — that Rajyam's musical recourse slowly died down to insignificance. Her violin box collected dust. The bow got blown and relegated to the dust-bin. Music departed from her life making it very insipid and pungent. Now that the waves of music travelled to her unexpectedly, the atmosphere made her feel more enlivened and inspired. Joy and pleasure appeared to pick up meaning once again.

After all, Rajyam's life was not that lamentable though it lacked the spark. Six years ago, a party arrived at her parents' place and Venkatappayya was a part of that group. It was a bridal interview. One in the group wanted her to sing. Her father was spending a lot on her music lessons all those years and now the time appropriate dawned that she should display her musical talent.

She took up a song in Thodi Raga but it began with an " *apasruti* ". Tala did not come to grips. She was all conscious of her mistakes and was flabbergasted at her helplessness. At the finish of the song, tears rolled out of her eyes. But the bridal interview party seemed very appreciative of her capacities. What does an innocent bride like Rajyam know about the grace of the Telugus in not discriminating Sruti-Apasruti, Laya-Avalaya ! " Your son-in-law need not run after a job, " said one of the party and Rajyam had only to laugh silently at the gross ignorance.

Venkatappayya did marry Rajyam developing a liking for her with all his heart. His name was boorish but he was not. Andhra Varsity had already conferred an arts degree upon him and he was one of the many LDCs of the composite Madras state drawing a salary of Rupees Seventy-two a month.

When Rajyam started her married life, she had occasions to sing for the pleasure of her neighbours. Her husband never interfered with her musical touches and she had to open no tune to him. Entering the family way, she had no leisure to practise the repetitive lessons. All that receded into the past.

Boys made loud noises as part of their play and this arrested her attention. She called them back. Two boys, five and four in age, came running in.

" Is your younger brother sleeping ? "

" Yes, snoring too. "

" Will your screaming not disturb his sleep ? "

The elder one gave out a mischievous laugh but both put on faces of guilt.

" That girl over there is singing marvellously well. Why don't you hear silently ? "

They followed her suggestion.

Rajyam was a talented mother.

That girl started Swara-Kalpana. Swaras were swelling like water springs. Sometimes fierce like the falls too. She came to the top-pitch in Gandhara and produced Swaras.

It was very rejuvenating for Rajyam. Happiness proper in life is possible only through music. One may not sing, but appreciation of music will add glory to life, no doubt, she thought.

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Perhaps an younger brother of the girl came on the scene and added a Swara in his own wild way. At that the girl got annoyed, stopped her practice and said, " You stupid ass, don't want to learn music but are always ready to spoil my mood. "

" My Swara-Kalpana was all right, " retorted the boy.

" Let father come, we can decide. "

The boy came out with another long Swara-Kalpana. By theory it was all right, but the Apasruti was marring the effect.

In congenial envron even the bricks of the wall will recite music — mused Rajyam.

" Let father return. Then we shall settle account, " so saying she put a stop to the sitting.

Rajyam was not pleased with the way it all ended.

The girl was rendering Kritis all known to Rajyam. She felt herself to be in heaven for a time. The elder son inquired why the girl stopped singing.

" Because the boy there misplayed. "

" How was she singing, mother ? "

" She had received lessons, practised well."

" Do you also know how to sing ? "

" Yes, I do, shall I teach you too ? "

"No, boys don't sing. "

" No boy, boys do sing. Shall I teach you ? "

" Yes. "

" I shall, after a time. " Rajyam again reclined on the floor bed." My dear boy, please massage my legs."

The elder boy instantly followed her instruction. The second son said, " Shall I massasge the arms ? " and without waiting for her reply started pressing her arms and hands.

Rajyam was musing over a Kriti in Raga Kalyani. She was not able to remember things in their right sequence.

" No, your singing is not good. That girl over there did it well. "

" I have forgotton all my notes, " said Rajyam.

Just then a thumping sound was heard from the other room as though a plate had fallen down on the ground.

" Was it a dog ? Please go and see. " Both the boys rushed towards the other room.

" No, not a dog, mother, it was only a cat, " the boys reported back.

" Thank god, — you should always keep the doors closed. "

" You wanted us to go out and listen to the music."

" Even then, while moving out, you should keep them closed, " she very patiently instructed them.

Venkatappayya returned from his evening walk.

" The moonlight and the right fragrance from over there are very hilarious, " he said.

" Oh, you have come back so soon ? "

" Finished the job I went out after. "

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" Did you pay back for the sins ? "

" Yes, partly. "

" Perhaps you let yourself loose recently. "

" No, no, not that. "

" Your way of talking made me feel that. "

" No, no. "

" I'm sorry then. "

Venkatappayya took out a packet he had secured within his upper cloth till then.

" Let me see what it is. "

" I shall show you. "

The packet contained a saree, heavily bordered with Zari. There was also a matching blouse-piece in silk. The saree that a commoner and a Maharani would equally like to own.

" You purchased this now ? "

" Yes. Glad I did that before the money got all exhausted. "

" Where did you obtain the money for this ? "

" Rajyam, you will not pardon me if you know that. "

" What did you do ? my....

" Please don't get upset. promise me you will not get annoyed of that. " He projected his right hand towards her. She received his wavering hand coolly and closed it by her own right hand.

" Why do you look so upset ? What did you do ? Hope you have not stolen the money from somewhere, " said Rajyam.

" Much heinous to that. When you had the typhoid relapse I lost all hopes. A friend who visited gave me the advice instantly and I acceded to that. "

" What was that ? "

" You did not hear the whole truth as yet. He took it out to the bazaar and sold it away for rupees two hundred and fifty !

" I never dreamt that it would fetch that much. Thought it was damned old. But understand old ones are in demand and are costlier. "

Rajyam by now understood what he was struggling to suggest. She looked around the corners of the room.

" No. You needn't do that now, Rajyam. "

" So, it had moved out." She very deeply and heavily sighed.

" I know you will be upset, Rajyam. What I did was brutal, no second opinion. " Venkatappyya had put on the face of a culprit.

Watching how her husband's mind got overworked on this, she swallowed her pain instantly but with great effort.

" You haven't done anything wrong. Why do you call it a sin ? Any householder in your place would do the same. You have not put it to sinful use. There was acute need for money and so, you did that."

" We have only sons and no daughters. I thought we may not need that any further. "

" Don't bother. Let it go ! My voice got stuck up long back. My violin — will it save me after all ? That's all. I am blessed to the extent I deserve. My mother —The Violin — has vanished. Even while vanishing she was not graceless. She bestowed upon me

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her motherly blessing. She gave me a lease of fresh life ; presented me a saree and a silk blouse-piece. "

Rajyam's eyes could no longer contain the tears as she muthered these feeble words. She had not yet spread the saree for a full look of it.

Venkatappayya unfolding the furls of the saree gracefully placed it around her neck and most apologetically said, " This would serve you for life. "

" Yes, my dear. This shall be a sweet memory, " said Rajyam.

A SCAR

DR. B. PARVATI

I have kept your memory
Alive in me my son,
My daughter's twin
A decade went by since you left.
Six nights and five days you
suffered
We who live love to speak of it,
Knowing not what suffering is
In this narrow world
Of hard hospital cribs.
I didn't make them soft for you.
It never even occurred to me
To make you a soft bed.
You lived not on milk and love
But on needles and tubes.
Why did you enter my womb ?
Suffering was our bond.
Never for a moment did I fondle you
Nor even touched you —
Except when you were no more.
You were gone forever.
Hunger conquered grief.
I ate hungrily and cried while I ate.
I wept. I cried. Slept on a soft bed —
While your bare body
Chilled under the dark sky.
Your tender bones lay beneath the
earth
And pricked my body in its warmth.
Memory is a thorn.
Life is for the living.
Your twin sister and brothers
Mean more to me
who have borne them
As did bear you.
Take the thorn away son.
In that distant place
I cast your frail fair body
To the open earth and open sky.
Your father, sister and I came away.
As we came, your hands stretched,
As the earth between us stretched,
Groping it seemed for my touch.
Life is for the living.
Take away the thorn my son,
It pricks when I am bleeding.

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THE INDIAN PREDICAMENT

Dr. A. PRASANNA KUMAR

" THIS HAS BEEN THE WORST YEAR in independent India's history " is a refrain heard every year during the last forty-five years — a comment as common as the one repeated every year that this summer has been more severe than before. If it has been so bad, India as a democratic country would not have lasted this long. Since the historic " tryst with destiny " when the midnight hour of Agusut 14, 1947 heralded the birth of a free India, we have been longing for a dawn that seems to be eluding us all the time. As a perceptive writer put it " the revolution of rising expectations has resulted in a revolution of rising frustration." We are, perhaps, the most frustrated people in the world. For a variety of reasons all are frustrated — those in power for not getting more of it and those in opposition for not getting into power ; the bureaucrats for not getting what is " due " to them ; (One is reminded of the remark that the famous Austrian Empress " Maria wept though she kept on eating." She wept not because she was not eating but because her rival Frederick was eating more.") businessmen for not being able to make enough ; youth for not getting jobs and Professors for not becoming Vice-Chancellors. The list is endless. We want pay without work ; success without effort and progress without peformance. The priest's dilemma is relevant in this context. " Everybody wants to go to heaven but nobody is willing to die." Utterly wordly in our desires and actions, we claim to be morally superior and spiritually advanced.

To the skeptical Western observers India remains an enigma. Right from the year 1947 the Western writer has been prophesying the failure of Indian democracy, if not its fall. After Nehru who ? How ? What ? That question was followed by equally cynical comments about the " functioning anarchy " of Indian democracy. There has been a heavy flow of works, some scholarly and systematic, on the Indian State and society the study of which never ceases to fascinate the discerning critic and the persevering scholar. India, said a well known writer, neither dies nor succeeds but like the river Ganges endures. Is it a durable democracy bearing an unendurable burden ? As the Rudolphs put it, India is an " overloaded " state with the increase in levels of political

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mobilization resulting in demands hard to fulfil.

Rajni Kothari too views it similarly describing the problem as aroused consciousness versus stagnant or decaying institutions. State instutitions which were to serve as instruments of change and mechanism for modernization have declined. The problems of Indian polity are too complex to be discussed in a brief note here. It is pointed out that poor growth rate and " half-hearted social change " have marred India's political success. Industry, education and other crucial areas of development have not lived up to our expectations. Even in Jawaharlal Nehru's time, when the success of Indian democracy reached its peak, shadows of the coming events were cast. Nehru conceded that the system was unable to meet the demands of the growing population, as he put it." In other countries real full-blooded political democracy came after a good deal of education had spread, because of the economic revolution and all that which had prepared the ground for it, which had added to the resources of the country and thereby made it easier to fulfil the demands made by the people in those countries. In most Asian countries on the other hand, particularly in India, we have taken a huge jump to hundred per cent political democracy without the wherewithal to supply the demand which a politically conscious electorate makes ... "

Planning for development in a country of 330 million people, said Nehru in 1951, was no ordinary task. Yet, the first Prime Minister who was instrumental in developing many institutions, did not bestow much attention on population control. A charge was made against the Planning Commission which Nehru created and headed, that it failed to make reasonably accurate estimate of the population growth and grievously erred in its projections for the first twenty-five years.

In just twenty years India's population soared to over double the number of people and today stands at over 850 million. The second most populous country in the world, threatening to overtake China in the next century, India's population today constitutes over 15 per cent of the total humankind, but with only 1.5 per cent the total world income. Whereas India's annual economic growth rate has on average not exceeded a mere 3 per cent, India's annual population growth has been over 2.1 per cent. No less disturbing is the figure relating to per capita G.D.P. which has stood at a mere $ 360 in 1992 as against $ 36,000 of Switzerland, $ 32,600 of Sweden and $ 29,000 of Japan. Small countries in Asia, besides the " Asian Tigers ", have achieved considerable success on the economic front in the last two decades, leaving India far behind in every area of development.

India's success in the field of agriculture has been hailed as the " Green Revolution ". Still it is realised that China's output per hectare is three times higher and that of Phillippines and Thailand two times more than that of India. That 70 per cent of India's agricultural labourers continue to face the threat of poverty because of large-scale rural unemployment and underemployment is no ordinary problem facing the Indian polity. The debt burden on the fragile Indian economy does not need any particular mention. Our external debt which rose by $ 50

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billions in the 1980 " due to bad fiscal management " has touched $ 80 billions and will cross the 100 billion mark by 2000 A.D. One-third of this debt is to be repaid in the next five years and debt servicing adds enormously to India's agony. India's share in world trade is as low as 0.5 per cent and it does not require any expertise to estimate the future burden on India's population. The affluence of some sections of our society cannot mask the growing misery of the multitudes and James Scrlesinger's line " There are islands of abundance in oceans of misery " applies to India.

Another major problem overlooked by Indian leadership is corruption in public life. " Curruption " wrote someone " is not only tolerated but even regarded as the hallmark of our leadership." The nexus between corruption and violence has been pronounced during the last twenty-five years, a period marked by criminalization of politics. When violence has escalated into terrorism in many parts of the country, political leadership began to lean heavily on security forces to check it. The treatment justified though it may be, is symptomatic. Police, paramilitary and special task forces have grown in numbers placing additional burden on India's economy. It is incontestable that no state can abdicate its responsibility of maintaining law and order and can afford to keep quiet when its territorial integrity is threatened.

Unarguably the designs of some countries in the neighbourhood have been posing a serious threat to India's security. India has been forced to spend huge amounts on security forces in the Seventies and Eighties. While there can be no let up in our vigil, it has to be borne in mind that diversion of our scarce resources to security concerns is done at the expense of developmental programmes. Our young minds are greatly agitated over rising unemployment and many of them are tempted to join extremist movements and violent agitations. Almost all our public institutions and even the so-called pillars of democracy have been exposed to the charge of corruption.

The relationship between corruption and violence is causal and each feeds on the other. Political leadership has not only failed to curb the growing menace of corruption but even joined hands with corrupt elements at all levels of public life. James Manor observed that " No leader in India can be both honest and powerful." What is particularly tragic about the Indian situation is that a country that had upheld values of rectitude and principled conduct in exercising power under the influence of Gandhian leadership, began to decline rapidly in the Sixties and Seventies. Nehru thought that Parliamentary democracy was the best system because other forms of government were less accountable and were " likely to lead ultimately to some measure of authoritarianism." Ironically the same Parliamentary Government has witnessed the worst type of authoritarianism both at the centre and in some states.

Summing up one is not wide of the mark when one points out that the three major problems facing Indian polity are population, corruption and violence. The three are interrelated and unless attention is focussed primarily on the three, India's at-

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tempts to achieve political stability and social and economic progress might be of no avail. One might argue that our priorities are much different now because of the rise of religious fundamentalism and sectarian rivalries. Caste and religion are exercising dangerous influence on our society. Blood, it is said, is thicker than water. One might add that " money " is thicker than blood. Money therefore takes the first place in our priorities, followed by caste and religion. We are predatory in our greed and primitive in our instincts. Growth of literacy and spread of education can surely help in overcoming these disturbing trends. But as Nani Palkhivala put it with characteristic sharpness " illiteracy is dangerous, but cultural illiteracy is worse." Foreseeing all these evils, Mahatma Gandhi sought to mould our value system in such a way that the people of India would live together in peace and goodwill, irrespective of caste, creed and language. As Morris-Jones observed, Gandhiji used Hindu concepts for modern political purposes and modern concepts for the reinvigoration of traditional life. Gandhi and Nehru gave us a framework which alone can help us in overcoming the present crisis. The vision of the great leaders should be translated into issues of performance and the burden rests as much on the people as on the leaders chosen by them. Democratic Government implies not only responsible leadership but also an alert and active role by the people at large. It is not enough if they take part in elections and change governments every five years. The people have to reflect on every issue regularly and articulate their views through the many avenues available to them. Fortunately today the network of print and electronic media is vast and readily available to the people and the communication system enables the people also to control those in power, even if such a control is feeble and indirect. The Indian predicament is not a predicament concerning the Government alone. It concerns every citizen, everyone interested in India's welfare. If we fail to understand it and act in time, we will be doing grave injustice to ourselves and the posterity. There is no point in blaming an individual or a group for the crisis confronting us. Most of us know that South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hongkong have during the last twenty years achieved amazing progress by means of hard work and discipline. That is a lesson to a big and great country from a few small countries of Asia. As a seer recently exhorted the people : " Let every one do his/her duty without complaining about others. If each person does his/her job thoroughly and sincerely, the world will take care of itself." That is the need of the hour. ●

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SHRI AUROBINDO'S FOOTPRINTS

DR. J. BAPU REDDY

Shri Aurobindo's
Life Divine
in its dialogue with death
vindicates the mighty right of man
to transcend the frontiers of mind.

His Savitrian spirit inspires me
into a levitate adventure
of my liberated intelligence,
drowns my suffocating senses
in the infinite eternal cosmic sense,
a power beyond myself,

I love his love for man
revolving, evolving Heavenwards
thinking, seeing, searching inwards
transforming, transcending .....

I kiss his pen
that moves on into the mystic realms
undaunted
by the earthly weight and weariness
of the hand that held it.
I follow the lighted line
of Emersoian intuition
along which words of truth flowed
from his probing pen
on to the darkened sheet of Reality.
Interpreting the heiroglyphic script
of the twinkling stars.

Future unfolded
before his dreaming, voyaging eyes
as a red carpet roll
spread out for welcoming a VVIP.
God smiled on his humane face
discerning the destiny
that left man's homeland
in myopic mist.
Ends of swaying hair
on his soaring head
peep through the microscopic holes
opening into infinite unknown
universes.

As I gaze at the sky
with my jet rocketing looks
I find the ascending footprints
of Shri Aurobindo's intuitive thoughts
on the shoreless sands of silence
reminding man
of his identity with infinity
of his unity with divinity.

Dr. Bapu Reddy is a reputed poet with about twenty books to his credit. He writes with equal facility both in English and Telugu. He is a senior officer of the I.A.S. cadre.

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THE LOSS AND RETRIEVAL OF A NOBLE SOUL
A Critique on Dostoyevsky's " Crime and Punishment "

DR CH. A. RAJENDRA PRASAD

" CRIME AND PUNISHMENT " chronicles the tortuous voyage undertaken by a young Russian student, Raskolnikov for the retrieval of his " lost " soul. Obsessed with " half-baked ideas " and devoid of faith in God and in human nature, the protagonist arrives at the conclusion that " for the infidel all things are lawful ".

A recurring theme with Dostoyersky is the effect of crime on the spiritual state of his characters. Like Tolstoy's, Dostoyersky's moral philosophy is " at root religious ". He is the best one to choose for showing how " philosophy and story may go hand in hand ".

Dostoyersky makes " infidelity " the central aspect both in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov.* " Both Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov have been infected with that atheism which, coming from Western Europe, seems to have taken so much more virulently in holy Russia. With these young students their atheism is associated with a want of faith in human nature which they believe to be radically cruel, scoundrelly and corrupt. ... In accordance with this logic, both Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov have erected themselves a Nietzschean ideal of the *overman.* Raskolnikov believes that in order to prove himself such a man-god, he must commit a murder." [1]

In *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoyersky realistically portrays the sufferings of young Raskolnikov who neither believes in God nor has his own moral moorings, and the resultant agony experienced by him in times of difficulty. His lack of props makes him highly sensitive to the privations of life. Furhter, the prevalent atheism of the day almost unhinges his mind.

Living in a very small room in St. Petersburg amidst poverty, dirt and filth, the protagonist can't help forming a prejudiced mind. In simple, all he can see is darkness everywhere.

Undoubtedly, " Raskolnikov is a noble soul corrupted by a false philosophy ". As a result, he resorts to taking shelter in his " half-baked " ideas which ultimately pull him down from normalcy. His " warped mind " forces him to do something prohibited.

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It can be said that Raskolnikov murdering the old woman money-lender is a sort of protest against the Establishment. Maybe, by indulging in this dastardly act, the protagonist tries to prove to the society that he can't be taken for granted.

Raskolnikov is a stranger amidst his natives. Since the inception of the idea of murder in his volatile mind, he has kept himself aloof. Being caught in the whirls of his half-baked ideas, he loses himself to the dreadful thoughts and dreams. Joseph Warren Beach's assessment of Dostoyersky's characters is very true in case of Raskolnikov; " They are so relentlessly hounded by furies of fear, shame, passion, remorse, indecision – the pressure is so strong upon them to do something, to reach some decision".[2]

Being entangled in one of these moods, Raskolnikov receives a letter from his mother who lives in one of the provinces. The letter informs him that Dunya, his sister, is going to marry one Mr. Luzhin, a forty-five year old businessman and upstart. Further, the letter informs him the humiliation meted out to Dunya at the hands of one Mr. Svidrigaylov in whose house she is a governess. His mother writes to him that the proposed marriage of Dunya will be of " great use " to him also. All this is very insulting to Raskolnikov. He feels that it is a crude joke played on the poverty of his family.

Right now, Raskolnikov is on the brink of committing something dreadful. In this agonised mood, Raskolnikov is to witness the crude reality of life which manifests itself in the guise of degradation, poverty and privation in the lives of his fellow humanbeings. He cannot insulate himself from the travails of fellow humanbeings. As a result, he is to shoulder the burdens of others. His meeting with Marmeladov, a drunkard who lets his life sink and be a cause for the immoral life of his daughter, Sonia, and his meeting with a very young drunken woman in a pitiable condition obviously abused and driven out in Horse Guards' Boulevard further twist his already prejudiced mind. In all these cases, he can only see the indifferent attitude of the society towards the meek and helpless.

All this " injustice " that has prevailed " everywhere " seemingly strengthens the latent idea in his mind – annihilating the old woman money-lender which means to him annihilating the evil. He thinks that this act will save him from penury and help him continue his studies at university. He convinces himself by considering that the old woman money-lender, Alyona Ivanovna, is stupid, greedy, deaf, ill and useless to society. Hence, he can eliminate her and help society.

Notwithstanding the deliberate planning he has done already, Raskolnikov commits the crime in a casual and haphazard manner, risking the chances of being caught at any stage of the crime. He equips himself with a hatchet and goes straight to the old woman's flat and kills the old woman. This bloodshedding proves to be unbearable for him. In the last minute, the old woman's sister appears on the scene and not knowing what to do, Raskolnikov kills her too. In a dazed condition, somehow he manages to escape from the scene of murder.

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Hereafter, to his dismay, Raskolnikov finds punishment coming from within for the dastardly crime he has committed. It does not leave him at peace with himself. He is constantly dogged by his guilty conscience. He is overcome with an intolerable sense of isolation — the spiritual isolation of the guilty. Actually, the whole problem lies in his inability to convince himself about the " righteousness " of his act. The crux of the novel lies in this aspect. Being a noble soul, Raskolnikov cannot be ignorant to the inner voice which holds trial for the crime he has committed.

The most intolerable thing for Raskolnikov is, in the presence of Raskolnikov himself people discuss the murder of old woman and the names of the possible culprits. This situation further worsens the deteriorated psychological condition of Raskolnikov. His anxiety-ridden mind almost betrays his crime. He seems " unhetant " to tell everyone, including the police about his crime. He plays a sort of game with the police and evades them. He begins to derive a sordonic pleasure from this hide-and-seek game with the police.

The psychological probing of the police plays havoc with the mental position of Raskolnikov. Porfiry, the police officer, keeps him on tenterhooks always by dragging him into conversation related to the murder of the old woman. This subtle psychological interrogation makes Raskolnikov nearly confess his crime. In one of his conversations with porfiry, Raskolnikov without any fear propounds his theory on " Crime and Punishment " : " ... lawgivers and arbiters of mankind, beginning with Lycurguses, Solons, Mahomets, Napoleans and so on, were without exception criminals because of the very fact that they had transgressed the ancient laws handed down by their ancestors and venerated by the people ... " Furhter, Raskolnikov divides the entire humanity into two kinds : Ordinary people and the " people proper ", that is, extraordinary people. He explains : " And all this idea claims is that men are *in general* divided by a law of nature into two categories : an inferior one (ordinary), that is to say, the material whose only purpose is to reproduce its kind, and the people proper, that is to say, those who possess the gift or talent to say a *new word* in their particular environment. Having said this, he challenges Porfiry : " ... now that, I permit the shedding of blood. Well, what of it ? Isn't society well provided with prisons, banishments, examining magistrates and penal servitude ? So why worry ? Catch your thief ?" [3]

In spite of his deteriorating mental position and the constant vigilance of the police, Raskolnikov tries to stick to his guns. He resolves to protest against the vile and stupid nature of people. As if the trouble he is having with the police is not enough, his tormented mind is to cope with the pompous behaviour of Luzhin and the depraved sensuality of Svidrigaylov. He encounters them suitably and saves the honour of his sister. Further he is to witness Mrs. Marmeladov's self-inflicted joke on her poverty-holding " funeral dinner " in the "honour" of

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her dead husband, in spite of her stinking poverty. The funeral dinner proves to be total failure as none of the significant invitees turn up at the function. There itself, Sonia, Mrs. Narmeladov's step-daughter, is falsely accused of a theft by Luzhin. Raskolnikov with the help of Lebezyatnikov saves Sonia's honour in the last minute. All this makes Mrs. Marmeladov lose her sanity and subsequently lose her life itself.

The cumulative effect of these incidents which stand as testimony to the cruelty and scoundrelism of human nature is to further demoralize Raskolnikov. These pathetic incidents strengthen his pessimism and further alienate him from the humanity.

Amidst these troubles, he finds solace in the company of Sonia who offers him " unconditional compassion ". This attitude encourages him to confess his crime to Sonia. The immediate reaction of Sonia to the confession of Raskolnikov is sympathetic consolation only. She suggests to him to wear a " cross ". In a subtle persuasive manner, she encourages him to return to God. But Raskolnikov does not yield immediately to God. Somehow, he cannot accept the failure of his " philosophy ".

But it is Svidrigaylov with his depraved sensuality and unbridled immorality who causes " repulsion " in Raskolnikov against his own crime. Svidrigaylov suggests to Raskolnikov that the latter is no better than him and like him (Svidrigaylov) evading the arrest by the police. Raskolnikov does not bear the idea of being equalised with Svidrigaylov : " It is not agreeable situation for Raskolnikov. It is as if another self, a viler self, were there to remind him, how vile he is ".[4] In this novel, Svidrigaylov serves the role of " Shadow or Double " to Raskolnikov.

Svidrigaylov commits suicide as if to find a way-out from his guilt-ridden life. This step deters Raskolnikov from taking up the same recourse. Goaded by Sonia's words, he goes to the police and boldly confesses his crime. His preference for confession is certainly the good beginning of his spiritual regeneration. Later, he is tried by the Court for his crime and is awarded eight years penal servitude in Siberia. Sonia accompanies him to Siberia.

During the imprisonment, Sonia with her perseverance, constancy and compassion wins his heart. It is Sonia's effort that has brought Raskolnikov's alienated soul back to humanity. It is her love which has helped Raskolnikov to retrieve his " lost " soul.

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SACRED FLAME

CHANDRA SHEKHAR DUBEY

A sacred flame burns in my heart ;
Your reticent eyes, dishevelled hair
leave question marks
on my face, and in the depths of my heart.
I return stripped, bestial
to suck you to the last drop
or faint naked on your sandy beach,
bathing in sun like a tourist on Goa beach
drunk unconsious by 'fenni' ;
But your touch translates me
and I return to the azure of love
compassion and thought
you are eternal bliss, a cup of joy;
and solace to my mind and heart,
and not pears to be crushed and swallowed.

TRUTH BETWEEN DREAM AND DAY

R. K. SINGH

In the chilly deep of this winter
the shifting clouds wave hands.

Will the day keep all the promises of the dawn?
I see milky blood dripping down their nails.

There is nothing save the spirals of smoke
midst the swelling dreams rocked by waltzing sun

my thirst for sleep and rest is reduced
to orgiastic pain melting down

into the sea of barren academics
I search the red tears shed on the Cross

and face a mirage of abject helplessness
as truth carved out of myths between dream and day.

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DHARMA : SOME ASPECTS

DR. G.C. NAYAK

DHARMA OCCUPIES a central position both in Indian life and in Indian thought. It has been used in various contexts to mean different things. One of the most significant aspects of *dharma*, however, is that it stands for certain sustaining principles (*Dharanaddharma mityahuh*). *Dharma* not only sustains the individual as well as different groups in the society but it also upholds the society as a whole. The violation of the principles of *dharma* leads to the utter destruction of the entire social structure (*Dharma eva hato hanti*).

The myth of *dharma* in the sense of something of a permanent value in all possible circumstances is doomed at the very outset in view of changing system of values relevant to a certain definite context only. *Dharma*, according to Dandekar, " has always been regarded as not being static. The context of *dharma* has often changed in the changing contexts of time, space and environments ". It may be true so far as it goes, but for the Indian mind, it is also a fact that there is a sort of irrepressibility associated with the concept of *dharma* which cannot be lost sight of. *Dharma* is venerable, eternal and universal, (*Esha dharmah sanatanah*)

Let us consider *saadhaarana dharmas*, which are expected to be duties of universal application and validity. When we deal with the cardinal values like truth (*satya*) or non-violence (*ahimsa*) our footing is on a firmer, a surer, ground than when we talk of duties of a clan or a class. But even in these cases also controversy cannot be always avoided, for we have to take into consideration certain concrete situation or a context in order to understand and apply these concepts. In a different and new situation *satya* or *ahimsa* in the traditional sense may not hold at all on account of some overriding reasons. *Satya*, in certain context, may be very far from a mere simplistic adherence to speaking the literal truth, as Kazi Nazrul Islam has aptly pointed out, and *Ahimsa* may be practised through destruction of all evil-doers, as Ambedkar has rightly remarked. It implies that the sustaining value of Dharma is only relative to the context; *saadhaarana dharmas* are also meaningful and applicable with reference to the context. It is also inevitable that in a complicated

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situation we should be called upon to make a choice and pass our judgement in accordance with the scheme of values chosen by us; this is unavoidable as the matter stands.

In our day to day existence in the society and in our inter-communal or even inter-national transactions it becomes so very necessary that a deliberate choice be made in favour of what Sita would designate as *Saadhu dharma*, *dharma* that respects the dignity of others as much as it respects one's own. Mark her words, *yathaa tava tathanyesham* (as in your case, so in case of others), while giving advice to Ravana concerning protection of women," *Saadhu dharmamavekshasva saadhu saadhuvratam cara, Yathaa tava tathaanyeshaam rakshya dhara nisaachara* ".

Justice can be ensured if an equal treatment is meted out to people irrespective of the fact whether they belong to us or not. The concept of fairness, according to Râwls, is fundamental to justice. And the idea of fairness is inherent in the notion of *Saadhu dharma* as envisaged in *Valmiki Ramayana* and is propagated in the form of Sita's advice to Ravana.

However, there is nothing like social justice immutably fixed once and for all; social justice needs to be reviewed and re-evaluated from time to time in accordance with the demands of the society, just as the notion of *dharma* also undergoes change according to the social needs. Moreover, in doing justice to one group of people we may conveniently forget that injustice has been done to others and even if we may invoke the concept of *dharma* to justify our conduct, it cannot make us free from the changes of injustice at least in that respect. In trying to eradicate injustice in certain form we may be involved in greater injustice in some other respect, and we should not lose sight of this. Perfect social justice, therefore, is a myth; we have got to be satisfied with the conception of a working social justice.

Allowing a majority of the people to suffer from poverty while a few are allowed to live in luxury is also an injustice that is being perpetrated in most of the countries even today. When we come to consider the misery of the millions of our own countrymen who are suffering from abject poverty even now, we should not forget that poverty is not " the monopoly of the scheduled castes; millions of other people share the same misery and poverty. The tribes, Girijans and Adivasis are much worse off socially and economically than the scheduled castes."

A working social justice under the circumstances, not any perfect justice, of course, which is a *will-o-the-wisp*, can be ensured only in a society where there is constant vigilance and a genuine willingness to eradicate imbalance which is another name for injustice. *Dharma*, in this context, would consist in the eradication of imbalance wherever it is found, not only in economic matters but also in the field of education, employment and opportunity provided to different groups of people. So far so good. Theoretically it may be alright. The crux of the problem, however, lies in the fact that in a society where in the words of Goldsmith, " Laws govern the poor and the rich rule the Law ", social justice in a large scale would not in fact be allowed to operate.

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I am, therefore, of the opinion that we can have only instances here and there of social justice being ensured in a piecemeal manner, e.g., dealing with slavery, untouchability, cruelty towards unfortunate children who are born and brought up on the footpath, torture of women for dowry, etc. A working social justice, therefore, would actually mean only such piecemeal justice meted out to different groups at different times, thus maintaining balance from time to time, as far as possible, by eradication of excesses wherever they may be. The well-known statement of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita, " *Dharma samsthaapanaarthaaya sambhavaami yuge yuge* " (I get myself incarnated in different forms from time to time, in order to establish *Dharma*) can be appreciated, in my view, in this light.

Halbfass finds certain kinship of Dharma with Dhriti and refers to a passage in *Yogasutra bhaashya Vivarana* attributed to Sankara as follows : " *evam varnaashramaanaamapyan yonyopakaarena dhritikaaranatvam, parasparopaashrayana hi jaged akhilamapi dhriyate* ". In defence of " mutual support and sustenance " for which both the concepts of *dhriti* and *dharma* stand, Halbfass points out " Mutual support and upholding appear as fundamental conditions for the preservation of the natural and social world. Interdependence is a pervasive principle which is both factual and normative. All entities in the world, in particular living being and different social groups, have to support each other actively or passively. Self-preservation is impossible without mutual support and sustenance ".

So far so good. But mere sustenance value, according to me, though undoubtedly important, is not enough. Moreover, under certain circumstances, it may not be conducive to justice. Justice should not be allowed to be sacrificed in the name of *dharma; dharma* should rather facilitate the implementation of justice in the society. An unjust society can be held together for quite long on the basis of mutual sustenance of different powerful groups at the cost of the weaker section, and this may be perpetrated as *dharma* in a particular society. But we certainly should not opt for Dharma in this sense, for, in the words of Mahabharata, it is not *dharma*, it is only *Kudharma*. In that case, *dharma* would stand in need of appropriate modification so that we may come to have what Sita in *Valmiki Ramayana* regards as *Saadhu dharma*. Society should be sustained on principles which would not only suit us but even those who do not belong to us, so that respective growth of different groups without any exploitation of one by the other may be ensured.

To me it appears that *Varna dharma* can be an example of *saadhu dharma* if and only if *varnavyavastha* is determined by *guna* and *karma* alone, as explicitly mentioned in the *Bhagavadgita*, not by birth. *Guna* and *Karma* are not determined by birth and heredity; environment as well as personal efforts and aspirations of the individual have a significant role to play in this regard. And what is more, *guna* and *karma* are not fixed once and for all. People should not be allowed either to prosper or suffer generation after generation.

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THREE GREAT STRIDES

M.G. NARASIMHA MURTHY

The demon king, mighty Bali
Performed a great sacrifice
To enhance his powers
And was generous with gifts
To those present at the sacrifice.
Child Vamana joined the priests.

Pleased with his presence,
The king offered the brilliant child
Any gift that might
Fill his heart's desire.
Neither gold nor silver
Nor all the wealth of the world
Would tempt the charming child,
But all that he wanted
Was a small piece of land
measuring three little steps.
Amused by the child's request
Bali nodded his assent.

Lo and behold ! child Vamana
Grew in size as Bali gazed.
One step covered the earth
And the other filled the skies !

Vamana's cosmic form
Filled Bali's heart with awe
No space was left for the third.

Humbled thus, the demon king
Bowed his head
And Vamana placed his foot,
And Bali sank at once
Into Paataala, the nether world.

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A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO RELIGION *

PROF. I. V. CHALAPATI RAO

THE BANNER-BEARERS of India's true culture are not monarchs or multi-millionnaires or political personages but wise and selfless men like Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo who stood for the eternal values of life and humanitarian work. Ramakrishna Mission has been doing excellent work through its branches all over the world. Its chief contribution is re-interpretation of our scriptures and propagation of Vedanta which conveys the message of unity and practical spirituality which cuts across all religious and cultural differences. Swami Ranganathananda belongs to this great Mission.

Like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Ranganathananda has been going on a lecture tour of the different countries of the East and the West spreading the gospel of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. His scholarly and spellbinding speeches present the subtleties and profundities of religion and philosophy in a language tailored to the levels of the target audiences, be they university dons or ordinary citizens. His lectures on Upanishads, Gita, Bhagavatam etc., always drew mammoth audiences.

Swamiji is a prolific writer with a facile pen. Some of his works are " The Message of Upanishads ", The Christ we Adore ", " The Essence of Indian Culture ", " Vedanta and Modern Science ", " The meeting of East and West in Swami Vivekananda ". " Eternal Values for a Changing Society ", and " A Pilgrim looks at the World ". L.P. records and casettes of some of his discourses are popular. He is at present the Head of the Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad and Senior Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, the world-wide organisation at Calcutta. In 1986 he became the first recipient of the prestigious Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration.

The central theme of the book under review is that there is no conflict between the two important disciplines, Religion and Science, and that India's approach to religion has been

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* " Human Being in Depth " A Scientific Approach to Religion : By Swami Ranganathananda. Edited by Elva Linnes Nelson. Published by State University of New York Press. For Information : . State University, Plaza, Albany, New York, 122246. U.S.A.

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rational and experiential. Unlike the Western experience, religion in the over four thousand year long historical experience in India, has not only allowed but also encouraged questioning and enquiry like any of the physical sciences. In support of the main theme the author has referred to the views of several Western scientists and Eastern philosophers and mystics of world-wide repute. One cannot but wonder at the staggering number of references and apposite quotations reinforcing the author's comments and view-points.

In his attempt to prove that there is harmony and close kinship between religion and modern science, the Swamiji has thoroughly explored Vedanta with its various Yoga aspects in the context of its role in mental and spiritual development of the human being. The book consists of three chapters — three interlinked essays with sub-headings : I. Science and Religion ; II. Our Scientific Age ; and III. Consciousness, itself. The common thread of " Human being in depth " runs through all of them and gives unity to the treatise.

Chapter I focuses on the harmony between science and religion, pointing out the striking similarities between Vedanta and science in their objectives, methods and spirit. In this well-documented essay we find that " The Vedanta recognised two levels of spirituality, namely the spirituality of the secular ethical dimention referred to as *dharma*, and the spirituality of the mystical dimention referred to as *amrita* in the Upanishads and the Gita. At the stage of *Dharma* a person starts on the spiritual journey of Psycho-social evolution in the language of modern biology, evolves from individuality to personality, and achieves ethical awareness, human concern and a happy inter-human relations. Thus after fulfilling life in the social context, one continues the journey in the *amrita* or mystical or higher spiritual dimensions, at every step of which his consciousness overcomes limitations, genetic as well as psychic and expands and becomes universal. This universality is our true nature. This is the process of raising consciousness to higher levels.

In this evolutionary process, the self or the ego is killed, which means that consciousness of " me " and " mine " which is the centre of our existence and the epicentre of all psychic earthquakes caused by the distorted self, is painlessly removed. The criterion of our progress in the spiritual journey into " within " is how one is " not me , but thou ". This is the attitude of the truly religious or spiritual men,. This is otherwise called liberation or deliverance from bondage. One will be free from that feeling of selfishness when one thinks that he is not an " individual " having a separate identity from all others. One becomes then " universal " with a raised consciousness. Ranganathanandaji quotes Swami Vivekananda " Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached " which is still relevant as his message to humankind. Vedanta, the science of sciences, is associated with *Viveka* (critical discrimination), Vairagya (inner detachment) and a faith in the human capacity to probe the meaning of existence and to understand the mystery of the universe (Nature and human nature). The human being has an immense potential for growth and is ever-evolving.

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Chapter II contains a comprehensive discussion of the nature of Truth and the Vedantic approach for its attainment through Shraddha (faith). Buddhi (reason) and Shraddha are complementary. Enlightened reason integrated with faith produces creative energy. Blind and unquestioning belief does not belong to Vedanta which does not stand for any doctrine or dogma or rigid observance of rituals. It is only a positive attitude, a cheerful temper and a deep conviction that truth lies in the profound depths of life and it requires a sense of enterprise and spiritual adventure for its investigation and ultimate discovery. " Pure consciousness " is identified as Truth in Vedanta which is " the science of human possibilities ".

In chapter III the book reaches its climax when Truth itself is analysed and explained in a manner that builds bridges between science and Vedanta — the Vedantic consciousness field (Brahman of the Upanishads) and the unified field of the modern science. Human life is not only an outer journey in time and space but an inner journey into the mind to discover the spiritual truth. The body is perishable but the soul is immortal. The soul is the inner self. Religion is the science of " being " and " becoming " but not " having ". We should try to realise the best in human nature. Religion is the science, Spirituality is its achievement. Vedanta is the key. Eternal progress is its watchword.

Meditation will unfold the infinite potential being hidden in the inner recesses of the human mind and fosters a frictionless flow of creative energy. Scientists have described this state of Peace (restful alertness) as a fourth major state of consciousness which is physiologically and psychologically different from waking, sleeping and dreaming. " Meditation is the technique of inner penetration supported by moral strength which is achieved in the course of our journey in space and in time in the context of human interactions in society ".

Never before in the history of the world, at least in recent memory, there has been a greater need for stressing the harmony between science and religion because uninformed critics tend to think that the two disciplines are antagonistic and mutually exclusive. If the votaries of science call religion " the old superstition ", the protagonists of religion call science " the new superstition ". If the former call religion " a fad " or " opium of the people ", the latter turn round and say " Science is continuous discovery of its own mistakes " and seeming nonsense of today may tomorrow be demonstrated truth ". In such an atmosphere of misunderstanding and mutual distrust the publication of this book which synthesises and harmonises science and religion is timely and most welcome.

The book is well got-up and written in an engaging style marked by clarity and vigour. Wherever Sanskrit words are used, they are accompanied by English translation. At the end of the book the reader will find Notes and Index. Under " Acknowledgements " and " Bibliography " the author has provided a useful list of books — reading list. All things considered, it is an eminently readable book which everyone should study, not merely read.

Let us hope, Ramakrishna Mission will soon bring out a low-cost Indian edition of the book by arrangement with the American publishers. ●

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Philosophical Traditions of India : By P.T. Raju, Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi – 7. Price : Rs. 175.

In the course of his excellent Introduction, the author mentions how in the West there is a widely entertained notion that there is no philosophy worth the name in India ; what passes for philosophy is some kind of religious mysticism. He takes pains to point out the fact that there is a long-standing tradition in India of metaphysics supported by an elaborate epistemology and logic. Philosophy in India arises from life, keeps close to life unlike in the West where generally it is more an exercise of the mind with little relevance to the life of the common man. Philosophy is indeed closely allied to religion, rather to spiritual experience. No Darshana is admitted unless it is based on some spiritual experience verifiable by others with appropriate means. Further, Dr. Raju explains that systems of philosophy in India have not arisen in a historical order. Most of the schools have originated simultaneously ; for they are worked out in answer to the needs and challenges of man's life which has been very much the same all along.

After discussing the nature and development of Indian Thought, he gives systematic account of the Vedas, the Upanishads, Mimamsa, Charvaka, Jainism, Buddhism, Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Sankhya, Patanjali, Vedanta, Ethical Codes in the Epics and finally contemporary trends which are perhaps too brief. Though he mentions the different schools of Vedanta, he seems to think that broadly Shankara Vedanta represents the spirit of the philosophical mind of India. Incidentally, while discussing the concept of Maya, he states that this " mysterious energy is blind, unconscious force, or power." (P. 178) Certainly he must be aware that Yogic experience and perceptions in the Vedic tradition do invest this " Energy " with consciousness — Chit-Shakti. It is clear in the Upanishad that Maya is finitising power, it measures out the Immeasurable, *mimite iti maya*. There need be nothing mysterious about its nature or origin ; it is an inherent power of Brahman and is as real as Brahman is.

The author concludes on a positive note : " Philosophy as philosophy of life is more characteristic of the eastern outlook as a whole than mere artificial, intellectual constructions and reconstructions, however exact in their methods like pure mathematics." (P. 237) He is fully justified in saying

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that philosophies of life appeal more to the Indian mind than mere analytic philosophies. It is a real pleasure to read this well-argued book and repeatedly agree with the learned, experienced philosopher-author.

M.P. PANDIT

(This review was written by Mr. M.P. Pandit before his passing away)

From Man Human to Man Divine (Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Evolutionary Destiny of Man) : By Jugal Kishore Mukherjee. Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry. Price : Rs. 80.

Among the philosophers of the twentieth century, Sri Aurobindo is unique because he did not confine himself to arm-chair theorising. As a politician, he witnessed the best and worst man was capable of in this world of human affairs. As a Yogi, he traversed all the inner countries of the mind, plunged into the very depths of nescience and ascended the highest heights of spiritual illumination. While his article in *Bande Mataram* and his dramas dealt with man's present state, his philosophical treatises and poems posited the future possibilities for man traversing up the evolutionary spiral.

The book under review seeks a logical progression in the seemingly illogical adventure of man whose beginnings are shrouded in the hard-core mystery of Matter.

In spite of having gained a mental consciousness topped by occasional glimmers of the intuitive mind, man is certainly not the supreme creature in creation. Aided by wide and deep reading, Mukherjee presents the transformist views of Lamarck and Darwin that once and for all put an end to man's self-pride. Paleontology and " the close similarity in the arms of man and ape (which) shows that our direct ancestors were arm-swinging apes, perhaps not very different from the living chimpanzee " (S.L. Washburn) have given clear indications of the origin of man. Nevertheless, he remains a marvellous product of evolution to this day and is also poised to hear " the flute-call of the future." How will this future man be ?

Scientists cannot foretell the future shape and capabilities of man, but the visionary can, asserts Mukherjee and presents a clear account of Sri Aurobindo's philosophical speculations in this matter. Without denying the present human conditions and at the same time drawing creative lessons from our Vedic past, Sri Aurobindo feels that man's future evolution will receive conscious direction from man himself. Mukherjee presents the ways in which man should prepare himself to assist the evolutionary adventure. Obviously, Yoga is a time-tested way that helps man perfect himself, to move from a many-winged ignorance to an all-embracing knowledge. He gains the supraphysical sight, *paradrk*. Thought and speech then follow the illumined mind. Thus man's inner being stands transformed.

For those who would avoid vain questionings and who would rather set to work, the Aurobindonian Yoga can be of illimitable help for Sri Aurobindo was himself a Yogi, a spiritual centre for experimenting with the higher possibilities.

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Jugal Kishore Mukherjee himself has provided an excellent and practical introduction to Sri Aurobindo's Yoga in this book.

DR. PREMA NANDAKUMAR

Walt Whitman and Rabindranath Tagore – A Study in Comparison : By C.N. Sastry. B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi. Price : Rs. 120.

Dr. C.N. Sastry, known all over Andhra as " Amarendra ", has been a consistently good researcher and writer. A college teacher with decades of standing in ELT, he always wrote with precision and authority on serious matters. The present work has been a journey without maps, chartering the regions of mind common to the visionaries of the orient and the occident. Both Tagore and Whitman have been modern in the very best sense of the term. Dr. Sastry brings out the best in both the subjects of his study and makes a comprehensive and convincing comparison. At the factual level the study provides the chronologies of the life and work of both the poets. The subsequent eleven chapters delve the depths of the minds and hearts of the two intellectual poets. These open up vistas of the author's extensive understanding of their achievement.

The universals of poetry — spontaneity, transcendental love for creation, the Upanishadic adoration for the creator and His handiwork, Nature, in its myriad glories, an unswerving faith in human endeavour and a quest for excellence in imaginative expression characterize these two cosmic poets.

One is sure to be convinced that the scholar himself (who, unfortunately, is no more amidst us now) shared the vision of the seers — *vates sacer* was Carlyle's term in his *Hero as man of letters* – with his own insight.

DR. V.V.B. RAMA RAO

Animal Welfare and Nature : Hindu Scriptural Perspectives : By G. Naganathan, A publication of the Centre for Respect of Life and Environment, a division of the Humane Society of the United States of America. Price not stated. Copies can be had from the Theosophical Society, Madras – 20.

In this booklet Mr. Naganathan who worked for the Information and Broadcasting Ministry of the Government of India, in the Engineering Wing of the All India Radio, gathers, out of inveterate concern and deep study of the classical literature of India, gems of truth of eternal validity and universal applicability, about animal welfare and Nature as contained in the scriptural writings and sayings of the Rishis of old whose solicitude for all created beings and for their continued welfare was an article of faith and a testament of compassion surpassing every other known human sentiments. The equa-lity of all creatures of God, the immanent and the transcendent, without distinctions of their status in the evolutionary scale or their utilitarian aspects in the Cosmic scheme, is stressed with copious quotations from the Upanishads, the Bhagavadgita and the Puranas, spotlighting the many dark corners in human behaviour and attitude to Nature and her bounty, the beautiful flora and the enchanting fauna, the invulnerable ecological

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balance and environmental purity and integrity.

The benedictory "Saanti " message, the culminating wish expressed in every important Vedic hymn, is brought to the fore focussing the attention of one and all on the imperative necessity of harmony and peace reigning throughout the world of creation, not only for maintaining the balance of nature but mainly for the perpetual well being of all living organisms in these decadent times when the global cohesion is itself threatened by gigantic destructive forces unleashed through demoniac powers of the atom.

POTHUKUCHI SURYANARAYANA MURTHY

The Role of Tamil Poets in Freedom Struggle : By P. Gomathinayagam. Mukil Pathippagam, Rajapalayam. Price : Rs. 30.

The book based on the dissertation by the author for his M. Phil. Degree of the Madurai Kamaraj University, deals with the lives and patriotic inspiration of great poets in Tamilnadu during the turbulent times of the freedom struggle. As Prof. S. Manickam, his guide and Professor of the University, has observed in his commendatory foreword, the author has given a brief and interesting account of some of the leading poets of modern Tamilnadu whose revolutionary writings strengthened India's historic struggle for freedom — Subrahmanya Bharati, V.O. Chidambaram, Kavimani Desiga Vinayagam, Namakkal Kavignar Ramaligam, Kaviyogi Suddhananda Bharati, Bharatidasan, Jeevanandam and Tiru V. Kalyanasundaram. Giving the biographical details about the poets, the author describes their part in the freedom movement, inspiring their compatriots with a stirring spirit of patriotism and yearning for Independence from the foreign yoke.

As usually dissertations for degree abound in, this book also contains information loosely packed and not organised well. There are many avoidable solecisms, printing errors and repetitions — probably owing to hasty preparation and printing of the textual matter without careful revision.

POTHUKUCHI SURYANARAYANA MURTHY

Jnanakkavi Ramalingar : By Purasu Balakrishnan. National Book Trust, Green Park, New Delhi –110 016. Price : Rs. 21.

As Purasu Balakrishnan rightly says, Ramalingar (1823-1874) was a Buddha of our times. He was insightful, meditative, one who had rejected the baits of the world, a Sadhaka of the *metta bhavana*. His *metta* (Maitri : Friendship) was extended even to plants and creepers. Ramalingar was a tremendous personality of India's 19th century renaissance. Purasu Balakrishnan, was among the first to disseminate widely an account of Ramalingar's life and ministry through an English biography for National Book Trust.

Since Purasu Balakrishnan is a fine writer in Tamil as well, his translation reads like an original work. We learn of the effortless ease with which Ramalingar acquired a mastery of traditional Tamil poetry and himself became a fine poet. His intense spiritual nature no doubt granted him occult powers but Ramalingar was more interested in the Satiya Dharuma Salai,

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a free kitchen that is still feeding the poor, the hungry and the homeless at Vadalur near Chidambaram.

In an effort to help man build a direct bridge to the Divine unhindered by obscurantist traditionalism and blind ritualism, Ramalingar founded the Samarasa Sudha Sanmarga Satya Sangham. He initiated the worship of a glowing lamp for this purpose as the symbol could easily connect the individual soul with the Supreme.

Purasu Balakrishnan's homage is a gem that brings illumination for all those who are interested in our heritage as well as in individual Sadhana.

DR. PREMA NANDAKUMAR

Flowers and Their Messages : By The Mother. Fourth Newly Revised Edition, 1992. Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, Pondicherry. Price : Rs. 125.

Flower is a fragrant rainbow ; flower is a visual song ; flower is a celestial dream materialised over the terrestrial globe and eventually flower is a flower because it is an embodiment of pure living enchantment of cosmic life.

Since time immemorial the flower has been held in great esteem, admiration and adoration ; it has been deemed as an object of inspiration and illumination both for secular and sacred pursuits of man. It is an ephemeral manifestation of the eternity unmanifest.

The present volume contains not the flowers but the forms of the flowers. The form of an object is different from the object it represents. The picture of a mountain is not the mountain it depicts. Thus a book does not contain the objects but the forms of the objects. The object is tactile while its form is visual.

This " Flowers and their messages " contains eight hundred pictures of flowers, done in line and mass, in black and white, except four in colour. The pages in the book contain not merely the charm of the forms but the calm of words as well. The profundity of thought and feeling is the semi-abstract expression emerged from the Mother inspired occasionally by Sri Aurobindo's aesthetico-intellectual effulgence.

The Mother's penetrating descriptions and statements regarding the enchanting floral splendour are unique both in phraseology and ideology. The Mother's subtle awareness of each flower in its scientific and aesthetic aspects, in its structural and functional variations is immensely profound.

She is never tired of enthusiastically answering the queries of inquisitive aspirants about flowers of innumerable shapes, colours and fragrances.

One aspirant asks, " Sweet Mother, what should we do with the flowers which you give us every day ?" She answers, " Flowers ? You ought to keep them as long as they are fresh, and when they are no longer so, you must collect them and give them to the gardener (any gardener you know), so that he can put them in the earth to produce other flowers. Yes, one must give back to the earth what it has given us, for otherwise it will become poor ".

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The approach in the question as well as the answer is pragmatic, instead of physical. Apart from this sort of approach there are several other sorts of approaches in dealing with the flowers in this volume.

The drawings of the flowers are beautiful, while the Mother's words are wise; and thus beauty and wisdom embrace each other in this volume. Perpetual beauty and conceptual thought penetrate into each other.

Indeed this is a rare volume — a volume that displays the synthesis of word and form : word emanating out of silence and form emerging out of the void. On the pretext of dealing with flowers the Mother deals with many a thing other than flowers. Thus in this glowing volume one finds philosophy, science, mysticism, aestheticism, art, psychology and many a finer thing that belongs to the physical and psychical alike.

DR. SANJIV DEV

Elements of Astrology for the Busy Person : By Prof. S. Krishna Rao, The Institute of Education, Culture and Development, 2-1-408/3, University Road, Nallakunta, Hyderabad – 500 044. Price : Rs. 55.

" Elements of Astrology for the Busy Person " written by Prof. S. Krishna Rao is an excellent introduction to the science of Astrology. The learned author exhibits all his pedagogical skills in clearly and succinctly presenting the relevant facts of Astrology without burdening the " busy " reader with unnecessary details which are not useful to him at all, unless he indulges in recondite scholarly discussions. The book satisfies the crying need of the hour.

The conversational method followed by the experienced author goes to the very core of the mind of the reader without beating around the bush with a lot of verbiage. Though both the Niryana and the Sayana systems are presented and explained in the book, in a way comparatively, the author's preference to the Sayana system and his fervent appeal in its favour and forceful advocacy of the same should be given due consideration by the traditional astrologers, perhaps in their own and in their clients' interest. After all, the taste of the pudding is in its eating.

Among the unique features of the book special mention may be made of — his considering the ascendent degree as the Centre of the first house, his clear exposition of the role of the fixed stars, his interpretation of the aspects of Rahu and Ketu, and above all, his modifying the Hindu Dasa System so as to enable him to assign places for the " new " planets — Uranus, Neptune and Pluto — also without exceeding the total " predictive Time Frame " of 120 years ! In the light of the last mentioned, Part VI of the book " Traditional Indian Astrology — A Modern Orientation " assumes great significance in the over all content of the book. We may say without fear of contradiction that this part of the book is the real contribution of the author to the science of Modern Astrology.

DR. K. VEERABHADRA RAO

TELUGU

Atma Darsanamu : By Dr. K.V. Raghavacharya, Gandhinagar, Tenali – 522 201. Price : Rs. 14.

" Ko Addhaa Veda ka iha Pravochat " : Who knows the origin of this creation and who can tell it ? This

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is the query found in the Rigveda. Wherefrom did this variegated universe originate ? Wherein does it end ? What was at the beginning of this creation ? What is Atman ? What is Paramatman ? How are these three related to each other ? What is true and what is false ? What is bliss ? What is bondage and what is meant by liberation ? Is Moksha possible in this world ? What are the means for attaining Moksha ? What is the source of this so-called evil ? Questions like these perplexed the minds of the ancient seekers after Truth. They contemplated and found the answers. They were recorded in what are known as Upanishads in Sanskrit language. Readers eager to know the answers should read this book which gives a clear and vivid knowledge of the science of the soul according to Sri Sankara. We see before us a teacher who digested and knows the subject he is teaching, and who knows how to drive home the main point to the student in a simple language, without technical jargon. He himself, while for presenting the subject, raises the possible doubts that may arise and dispels them, with reason, logic and authority.

Subtle things are explained with the help of suitable and illustrative stories, anecdotes and occurrences of daily experience. "Adhyasa" the main plank of Sankara's Advaita is made easily understandable. Explanation and elaboration of the three stages — waking, dreaming and deep slumber — are par excellence. How to prove that Atman and Paramatman are identical ? Is it possible to see Atman in all ? How are we benefitted by it ? Ready answers are found here. Readers would become tranquil and enlightened and would recommend this to others also.

B.K. SASTRY

Agnisudha : By Sudhama. Sakhi Kumari Prachuranalu, 164-11-310/9/1, Salimnagar Colony, Malakpet, Hyderabad — 500 036. Price : Rs. 20.

Agnisudha is out and out modern in form and content. " Sudhama " is a reputed poet. The thirty-six free-verse compositions published in various journals exemplify the poet's sincerity, depth of thought and discursive philosophy. While Sudhama has a deep commitment for the best of human values, he does not appear to sloganise any of the 'isms' as such and that perhaps adds a new poetic dimension to his thoughts. Fine style, at once poignant and chiselled, an organised thought pattern, a laudable philosophy of life, and searching enquiry into the hidden ramparts of man's mind make *Agnisudha* a thoroughly readable work with a sense of muse that lingers on and on.

DR. DHARA RAMANADHA SASTRY

Cheekatlo Kaanti Rekhalu : By Dr. Antati Narasimham, Samata Sahiti, 4, Santosh Aprts., Santoshnagar, Mehdipatnam, Hyderabad - 28. Price : Rs. 35.

This is a novel based on social consciousness. The author has been personally committed to the emancipation of disadvantaged sections of the society, particularly Harijans. He is a firm believer in the abolition of caste system in the Hindu society to eradicate untouchability. He advocates

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cross-culture or inter-caste marriages as workable antidotes for this evil practice.

To communicate his thoughts effectively he chose to write many a novel, short stories, plays and poems. One of his earliest successful novels, *Aadarsham* contained the same theme. He argues in all his creative literary writings a kind of socio-legal reforms to liberate millions of downtrodden people.

The book under review has set in a situation that existed in the years of India's freedom struggle which the seeds for emancipation of the disadvantaged sections, i.e., the Harijans, was sown by Mahatma Gandhi. The plot in this novel revolves round Sashi and Kanta Rao, the two chief characters. The inspiring character in the novel is Dasupantulu. Police Officer Rajarao and his wife Ranee Basant help the hero Kanta Rao and his spouse Sashi to grow. There are Seenu, the son of the Police Officer, another Police Officer Sundararamayya and his daughter Kalyani, an young teacher Durganand and his students Achari, Bhavani, Chayadevi, Nagamani, Sarma and others complete the cast in the novel.

In the story, Dasupantulu, a staunch communist, influences Kanta Rao for social work such as imparting literacy skills to the downtrodden people living in a Harijanwada. Kanta Rao was arrested for his communist ideology. Later, during Quit India Movement he takes shelter in the house of the Police Officer. Seenu protects Kanta Rao and thereafter, he lives with Rajarao's family. Sundararamayya, Rajarao's successor in Police Department, too takes care of Kanta Rao. During freedom movement, the upper castes actively participated in Gandhi's constructive programme of abolition of untouchability. Dasupantulu after release from jail actively participates in the freedom struggle. He found leadership potential in Kanta Rao and desires to develop him. Later, he has been drawn to Telangana peasants' uprising. During this time, he comes into contact with Sashi, the landlord's daughter of upper caste, by rescuing her from molestation. Then onwards, she looks upon Dasupantulu and Kanta Rao as her role models. Thus Sashi gets close emotionally during college days and proposes to marry. However, Kanta Rao on grounds of social status declines. Each gets into an argument. The author presents here all his social philosophy and how the bad caste system developed over the centuries. In the narration, the author chooses Saanta (Peace) and Veera (virile) Rasas spicing with Sringara Rasa in the love episode of Shaahi and Kanta Rao. Thus *Cheekatlo Kaanti Rekhalu* which means " Rays of Hope in Darkness " is a unique attempt and the author deserves congratulations for pioneering this genre of Dalit literature in Telugu.

BUDDIGA SUBBARAYAN

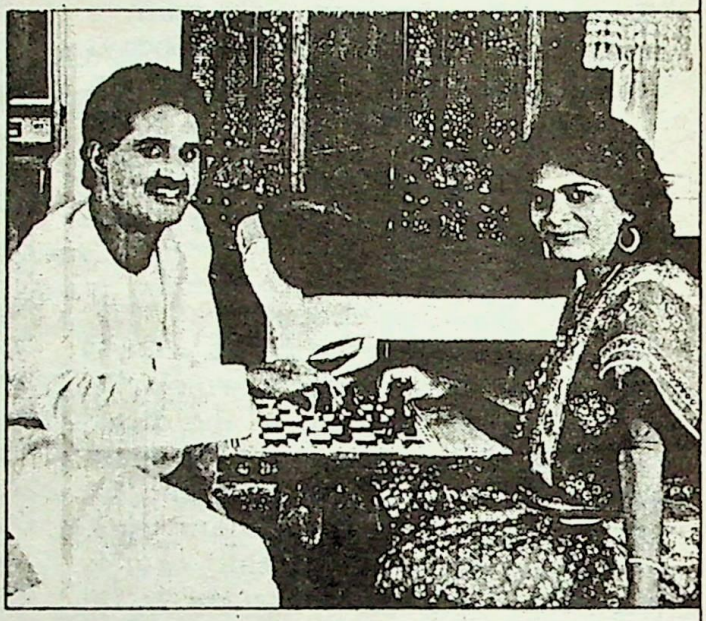
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TRIPLE STREAM

" The languid strings do scarcely move
The sounds are forced and notes are few "

Dear Readers,

The Triveni Foundation regrets to announce the sudden demise of Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao, Editor and foster-father of TRIVENI. He died of a massive heart attack on 27.11.1993. Till the last day he was a picture of perfect health and fine fettle, despite his years, working vigorously for the journal, the apple of his eye and alter ego. The snow in his hair could not make any difference to the fire in his heart.

His personality was multi-faceted. He walked long distances, rode the bicycle and played Tennis (his favourite game). His scholarly appreciation of literature and humane culture were matched by his love of Nature and social enthusiasm. Even in the difficult days of running the journal when shadows lengthened around him, he carried the morning in his heart.

On the 22nd October the centenary celebrations of Late Sri Kolavennu Ramakotiswara Rao, the founder Editor of TRIVENI were inaugurated in Hyderabad in a befitting manner with the support and co-operation of the Commissioner of Information and Public Relations. Hon'ble Minister for Information and Public Relations Shri. Srinivas delivered the inaugural address. Pleased with a good beginning and the encouraging response received from the public and the prominent officials and non-officials, Dr. Bhavaraju prepared elaborate plans for year-long celebrations and to bring out a special number of TRIVENI in 1994 to mark the occasion of the Founder's birth day. As we made blue prints for the future we little anticpated that he would leave us at this stage terminating his earthly sojourn. We have to hold back our tears and get to business to fulfil his hopes and aspirations. Death comes as a quirk of destiny. Providence decides the timing.

Dr. Narasimha Rao has left behind a rich cultural legacy, TRIVENI and the sacred mission of running it. The way to perpetuate his memory is not by merely erecting a statue here or unvieling an oil painting there but by strengthening TRIVENI in whose pages he lives for ever. Now his presence with us will be many times greater with his spirit guiding us.

As originally proposed by Dr. Narasimha Rao, this number is dedicated to Swamy Vivekananda the centenary of whose famous Chicago address is being celebrated all over the world. We could secure valuable material. We are confident that Vivekananda's gospel of courageous action; "Awake, arise and stop not till the goal is reached" will charge our batteries and give us spiritual strength. The only direction in which we should look now is FORWARD.

I.V. CHALAPATI RAO
Editor

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DR. BHAVARAJU NARASIMHA RAO – A GENTLEMAN PAR EXCELLENCE

DR. D. ANJANEYULU

For any person in a position of responsibility, always eager to get things done somehow, any how, it is difficult to remain a gentleman. But not altogether impossible. Luckily for us, there are a few, who are able to manage their affairs competently enough, without ceasing to be gentlemen, by the compulsion of their nature and the influence of their culture.

Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao was one of those nature's gentlemen. I have had the privilege of knowing him closely enough to be counted as one among the inner circle of his personal friends. I had met him first over forty years ago at Hotel Woodlands in Mylapore at a party given by Narla to a senior political leader (may be A. Kaleswara Rao) on his election to the Speakership of the AP Assembly. Here was a tall, dark, wiry, muscular, middle – aged man, polite and sociable, though a little reserved. No elaborate introduction was needed, as we could easily place each other — he as the printer and publisher of TRIVENI quarterly, and me as a Sub-editor of the Hindu.

We took to each other instantly and I invited him to my house. Whenever he was in Madras - thereafter, he used either to meet me or ring me up from his room in YMIA or his hotel in Mylapore. Off and on, he would suggest an article to be written by me for a special number or a topic of cultural and literary interest to work upon. After a few years, he wanted to include me as a member of the Advisory Board, but that had to wait for some more time, for obtaining the approval of the founder - editor, whose standards were very high and attitude uncompromising. But, finally, he was able to convince him about my background and suitability for the position, which, of course, was only honorary. In due course, I was described as " Associate Editor ".

A few years later, Narasimha Rao decided to have an office at the YMIA Building on the first floor on Armenian Street, in George Town. This enabled us to meet more often and me to keep track of the latest publications of Triveni .Publishers. At that time, his son, Murthy, was studying in Loyola

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College. But the sojourn in Madras did not last too long, as he was cheated by the person whom he relied upon for keeping acounts and canvassing for advertisements. By this time, Murthy had completed his academic course and found a berth in one of the Nationalised Banks. The office thereupon was shifted back to Machilipatnam.

Meanwhile, there were so many ups and downs in the financial prospects of TRIVENI, but Narasimha Rao, as printer and publisher, always, took it as a sacrament, never failing to bring it out. There was a time when he invited me to take over the entire editorial responsibility and bring it out from Madras, with the goodwill and support of local friends and well-wishers. It was not possible, as their number was fast diminishing and new generation of readers had come up, with different values, which was hardly aware of the existence and identity of TRIVENI. But the golden Jubilee number, with a collection of valuable and readable articles, was released from Sastri Hall in Mylapore at an impressive function in which Mrs. Rukmini Devi Arundale, Prof. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Mr. K. Chandrasekharan and others took part.

Sometimes, when all around was dark, help used to come from unexpected quarters. By this time, Ramakotiswara Rao was no more. And Bhavaraju was by now publisher as well as editor. A few years ago, Prof. C.V.N. Dhan of Guntur offered to print the periodical at his expense. It looked as though a good Samaritan had come our way, without our searching for him or working for it. The new arrangement of printing and production from Guntur, while the Editor stayed on at Machilipatnam, did work for some time. The Diamond Jubilee number of TRIVENI was released from Guntur by Professor K. Satchidananda Murti, then Deputy Chairman of the University Grants Commission. Soon, Narasimha Rao was obliged to have second thoughts about the continuance of TRIVENI in Guntur. He was looking ahead into the future.

Though he was nearly ten years my senior, I thought he looked ten years younger than me. He always managed to keep fit. May be by playing tennis regularly; more so by playing fair with everyone and keeping off tensions and worries.

By this time, he was getting on in years, fast approaching eighty. Probably, he had a premonition tnat something more substantial had to be done, to place TRIVENI on a sound footing and ensure its publication in future, irrespective of his presence on the scene. With his son already in Hyderabad and the support of leading citizens like justice Avula Sambasiva Rao, and others including justice Nittoor Srinivasa Rao he formed the TRIVENI Foundation as a trust. The editorial collaboration of Prof. I.V. Chalapathi Rao must have encouraged him decisively.

Whatever be the provocation, Narasimha Rao was never known to have said a harsh word against anybody. He was shrewd enough to understand human nature; but he was a gentleman who followed the dictum : " Na bruyaat satyam apriyam ".

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Dr. Narasimha Rao (who had some years ago received an honorary doctorate from Nagarjuna University) was always thinking not only of TRIVENI, but also of those closely associated with it. He remembered their years of birth, in which he used to see a pattern; K. Ramakotiswara Rao (1894), K. Chandrasekharan (1904); Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao (1914); and D. Anjaneyulu (1924). Now Prof. Chalapati Rao is about the same age as the last. he also used to say that almost all of them had small families — a daughter and/or son or none.

But none of them had an inkling that he would soon be not on the scene. We don't know if he had it. If he had, he did not breathe it out to anyone. But, though his physical presence is no longer there, it is just possible that, according to Theosophical belief, his astral body may be hovering around TRIVENI Quarterly. He was a lucky man, because he vanished in a trice. His life and death were an admirable illustration of " anaayaasena maranam; vinaa dainyena jeevanam ".

❑

NOTE TO THE CONTRIBUTORS

Articles should be brief and neatly typed in double space on one side of the paper and accompanied by a very brief (not exceeding six lines) bio - data of author.

Each contribution should be followed by a signed declaration that it is an original and previously unpublished writing. The translators should themselves obtain the permission from the original authors. The editor will not accept any responsibility for infringement of the copy - right.

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Late Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao

Editor

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A SHINING SOUL OF HUMANITY
Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao

GIRIJA

(This article is a spontaneous tribute to Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao by a TRIVENI Subscriber - Editor)

Saturday November 27th evening. warmly cocooned in a shawl, I was tuned in to the evening bulletin of regional news on the AIR. Only a short while ago Indian cricket team had valiantly struggled through the batting session of Hero Cup Final, placing a respectable target before the West Indies team. The newscast was hashing out the usual this and that.... My attention wandered off... to what I was reading : Mancini, Morelli, Freud, Holmes; connoisseurship of art, psychoanalysis, crime investigation; three unrelated domains apparently, yet three different functions of the same methods applied in different contexts.....

I came back to my orbit with a violent start. A big lurch in the pit of my stomach. The newsreader was droning on - Dr. Bhavaraju Narasimha Rao, editor of TRIVENI Quarterly.... Even before the name was out completely I know it was an obit. A chill gripped my heart. I felt like I had eaten mud - no, worse. I still feel that way.

My acquaintance with Dr. Rao began fairly recently - a year - and - a half ago. Or, spiritually speaking, I should date it back another six months perhaps.

In the last quarter of 1991 I was seized with the idea of writing a series of academic papers on detective fiction. Immediately I set to work, and in about five months the first paper of the series was ready to go. All along, however, one question was turning in my mind : where to publish these papers ? rather, who would accept ? Since scholarly study of popular and detective fiction had not yet caught up in our country, I had misgivings about their acceptance, particularly the first two or three papers, which I hadn't intended to be deeply analytical.

After carefully sampling the contents I had shortlisted three journals, one of which was TRIVENI. However, this last-named journal attracted me more. I tried to find the reason for this. The range and scope of its contents had a wider sweep,

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hence better chance for me. Apart from this practical reason, it didn't exude the stiff academic posture of the other journals. There was a spiritual bonhomie about it. And the editor's name rang a faint bell.... some nice impression, in the Gandhian context..... I couldn't connect. (I still am not able to). Anyway, TRIVENI it was.

In less than twenty days I received the acknowledgement - explaining the delay ! I was amazed. My knowledge of editors - I know queit a few of them - has been that they are a conceited and snobbish lot. They don't feel obliged to explain or apologize. But here is this editor explaining the delay of twenty days ! It inspired great esteem for him in me.

After about four months, I wrote to Dr. Rao again, inquiring after the fate of my copy. The reply was almost immediate. It came whithin ten days. He wrote that the xerox impression of my copy was very poor and his failing eyesight, in view of the advanced age was causing him difficulty in making it out. so, could I send a better copy > At least particular pages (numbers given) which were too poor ? I felt ashamed. The xerox copy was really poor. But I had no problem, even with those pages, and it didn't occur to me others could have problem with it. Immediately I mailed another copy - this time a carbon copy making sure it was okay, with apologies.

An editor of such venerable years and high learning, writing to an aspiring scholar - not even a reputed one - with such humble mien ! Truly a person of rare human quality. My respect for him went further up.

Some time later the letter of acceptance came. In it he made a request : After sixty years of existence, constantly the journal is now sailing rough weather. Would I please subscribe ? He wasn't selling or peddling or any such cheap doing. He was being candid and honest in a simple and direct manner. I wrote back asking for relevant proforma. Not that I could do anything, but an editor myself, I know the pangs of losing a journal.

By now we were in the last quarter of 1992, and working simultaneously I got ready two more papers. One I mailed to TRIVENI and the other to a jounal named by every professor I had consulted. (One year has passed and to this date I didn't get even an acknowledgement, even after repeated reminders.)

Dr. Rao sent me the proforma and intimated TRIVENI would be shifting to Hyderabad shortly. I decided I would call on Dr. Rao after the shifting and give the cheque personally, and shelved it till then. But a few weeks later my contributor's copy came from the old place. I inquired and got the reply that there was some delay and is likely to be over by end of following month.

After that for a long while I was caught in despairing circumstances. A leaden inertia pervaded my spirit. I didn't forget the promise but had no will to act. Even my next paper got stuck halfway through. then something jolted me out of that bleakhouse. I dashed off a letter to Dr. Rao's old address knowing it would be redirected in case of shifting. Also I finished the first draft of the stuck paper. that was about mid-1993. The sunny spell didn't last. I agin fell prey to morbid weather. Even Dr. Rao's reply from a local address didn't perk me up. My promise was pinching me but there simply wasn't

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enough moral force to spring me into action.

Then recently before Diwali : I was reading - more by force of habit without focusing K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's essays on Indian English poets. Poetry affects me strangely - it goes to my soul. As I read the excerpts I thought some of my poems were equally good and some better. I started wondering. How long since I'd written a poem ? what's happened to my spirit ? why not try now ? K.R. 's essays are good stimulants and, Diwali, just round the corner, a wonderful subject.

I had some trouble getting into the right frame of mind from my gloomy cavity. That done, I got the poem ready in less than an hour. A two-stanza affair. The gloom broken, things crowded the mind. Dr. Rao and my promise to meet him with a cheque was the first thought. I was terribly ashamed of my conduct. I quickly reviewed my position and saw that I couldn't do a thing till the end of November. I cannot take a hectic schedule or else my arthritic bones would yell in revolt. My sense of guilt was so intense now I couldn't face him with the cheque. I felt I could redeem my sense of dignity somewhat by mailing the cheque first. That would give me courage to visit him.

The poem too I enclosed with the cheque as a Diwali compliment and mailed it with a short note about my morbid circumstances and my sense of guilt. A week after Diwali his reply came. Thanking for the cheque in his candid way. Then he expressed concern over my morbid state. Would I please direct him how he could reach me (he wasn't yet familiar with the city) so that he could call on me and talk with me and see what he can do to help me out of the rut. I was thrilled. Usually kindness, where we do see it, is coupled with condescension, contempt, arrogance, etc. But here is kindness unsullied, made rich with affection. It was as though the purity of his soul glowed through the paper of the letter. Tears welled up in my eyes. Such unstinted humanness, in these callous times ?

I started mentally preparing myself for the meeting with him, which I tentatively fixed for the first weekend of December. A new paper, a very short one, was taking shape in my mind, and this I was hurrying to complete so that I could take it with me.

The effect of the letter was so strong that I could not pen a reply immediately. It took me a few days to gather my feelings and then I could only barely manage to communicate, and requested somebody to drop it in the box, immediately, please.

(But invariably, he forgot and dropped it a couple of days later. By then it was too late. I am deprived of the pleasure of one last word from him, or even the satisfaction of knowing that my feelings had reached him while the light was still on.)

And then, this news came - like a bolt, breaking me, shattering my bubble of joy. That this should happen now, just when I am on the verge of meeting him at last ! I didn't have the courage to see his mortal remains. What I couldn't see while the light was shining, I could not bear to see when it was out.

Oh, I knew it all along. He was an actogenarian (almost) and was in line for the take-off. But - so suddenly ? I feel cheated, malicliously

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tricked, by some cruel prankster.

He was no kinsman of mine. Not father, nor grandfather, not even a close colleague or an old fellow or long back teacher. I never once met him and knew next to nothing about him. Yet my sense of loss and desolation is so deep, no way I could account for it. I feel truly bereaved, as though I have lost my guiding angel, leaving me spiritually orphaned.

May his soul rest in peace and shine benignly on us of the mortal world.

Om Shantih !

TO THE FOURTH OF JULY

– SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Behold, the dark clouds melt away
That gathered thick at night, and hung
So like a gloomy pall above the earth!
Before thy magic touch, the world
Awakes. The birds in chorus sing.
The flowers raise their star-like crowns,
Dew-set, and wave thee welcome fair.
The lakes are opening wide in love
Their hundred thousand lotus-eyes
To welcome thee, with all their depth
All hail to thee, thou Lord of Light !
A Welcome new to thee, today,
O sun ! Today thou sheddest Liberty!

Bethink thee how the world did wait,
And search for there, through time and clime
Some gave up home and love of friends,
And went in quest of thee, self-banished,
Through dreary oceans, through primeval forests,
Each step a struggle for their life or death;
Then came the day when work before fruit,
And worship, love, and sacrifice,
Fulfilled, accepted, and complete.
Then thou, propitious, rose and shed
The light of *Freedom* on mankind.

Move on, O Lord, in thy resistless path!
Till thy high noon o'erspreads the world,
Till every land reflects thy light,
Till men and women, with uplifted head,
Behold their shackles broken, and
Know, in springing joy, their life renewed!

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KALI THE MOTHER

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The stars are blotted out,
The clouds are covering clouds,
It is darkness vibrant, sonant.
In the roaring, whirling wind
Are the souls of a million lunatics
Just loosed from the prison-house
Wrenching tress by the roots,
Sweeping all from the path.

The sea has joined the fray,
And' swirls up mountain-waves,
To reach the pitchy sky.
The flash of lurid light
Reveals on every side
A thousand, thousand shades
Of Death begrimed and black —
Scattering plagues and sorrows,
Dancing mad with joy.
Come, Mother, come !

For terror is Thy Name,
Death is in Thy breath,
And every shaking step
Destroys a world for e'er.
Thou " Time ", the All-Destroyer !
Come, O Mother, come !

Who dares misery love,
And hug the form of Death,
Dance in Destruction's dance,
To him the Mother comes.

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ADDRESS AT THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

(Chicago, 11th September, 1893)

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Sisters and Brothers of America,

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world ; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions ; and I thank you in the name of the millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honour of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings : " *As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.*"

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: " *Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me.* " Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this

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beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilisation, and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come ; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honour of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.

❑

A BLESSING

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The Mother's heart, the hero's will,
The softest flower's sweetest feel;

The Charm and force that ever sway
The altar-fire's flaming play;

The strength that leads, in love obeys;
Far - reaching dreams, and patient ways.

Eternal faith in self, in all,
The light Divine in great, in small;

All these and more than I could see,
Today may "Mother" grant to thee!

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CENTENARY OF VIVEKANANDA'S VISIT TO THE WEST

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

You have all heard that this is the beginning of a year-long celebration to make our people know about Swami Vivekananda and his great man-making, nation-building message. Very few people know yet, but every day more and more people are knowing about Vivekananda and his message, and during this one year there will be many meetings all over India wherein his ideas will be presented. It is high time that the nation wakes up to this Great Awakener of our nation. We were sleeping for centuries, perfectly satsified with our pettiness, hardheartedness, inhuman treatment of human beings, mutual quarrels and suffering through foreign invasions.

It was Swamiji who first awakened our nation, and he used these very words — " The sleeping leviathan is slowly awakening ". That was the theme of his first lecture on Indian soil after returning from four years in America and England — that was at Ramnad, near Rameshwaram. A tremendous reception was given to him and the Prince of Ramnad was pulling the chariot along with the youths. Swamiji was prompted by their enthusiasm to give a great speech. The opening paragraph is worthy of being recited in schools and colleges — that was 24th January, 1897. He said :

> " The longest night seems to be passing away, the worst trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awaking and a voice is coming to us ... India, this motherland of ours is awakening from her long deep sleep. None can resist her any more ; never is she going to sleep any more ; no outward powers can hold her back any more ; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet."

What a statement! What tremendous ideas! At that time the nation was practically asleep. There was no political consciousness, no serious desire for freedom. Most people were happy to get a thirty-rupees clerkship under the British. At that time he could see that this period was going to

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be a period of tremendous awakening, with impact upon the whole of India, every section of her people, and on the world outside. That is what the prophet could see and say. They can see far ahead. We see only a few feet ahead, but men like Vivekananda, and his own teacher, Sri Ramakrishna, could see far ahead — that in this age, this country of ours, which has stood and withstood so many centuries of foreign invasions and oppressions — it has some infinite strength within it. It is going to come out, manifest, and create a new glorious chapter of our long history. When you read Vivekananda literature you will get all these impressions, all this understanding of our nation. It is unfortunate that many of our people do not know what the nation's innate strength is. How we can manipulate the forces acting on the nation today to make it progress in the right direction. If our people had studied Vivekananda as seriously as they did before independence, things would have been different. None of these desperate situations would have arisen, or the sense of defeatism, the sense of despair, and not knowing which way to go. No direction — that is where we are today. This would not have happened if after independence our people, who filled administrative positions from top to bottom in government and were in many other types of service institutions in India, if they had studied this literature. India would not have remained a developing nation ; it would have become a fully developed nation by now — and with none of these moral problems facing us today. Because, before independence thousands of patriots were inspired by Vivekananda literature and they loved this nation and the common people and wanted to make India free. Even Mahatma Gandhi said in Belur Math, when he visited the Headquarters of the Mission and was requested to say few words : " I have studied Vivekananda literature very carefully, after reading his books the love that I had for my country became a thousand-fold."

For Gandhiji to say this! He himself was a great lover of India. We in India today need to develop a little love for the nation, a little love for the people. Most of these moral problems, ethical problems, dearth of values, will disappear — with a little love for the people, love for the nation and the spirit of service that follows that love. This is the inspiration that is provided in the " *Complete Works* " of Swami Vivekananda, now in eight volumes. In these books you have the message of human development and fulfilment, not only for our nation but for people in all parts of the world. Men like Monsieur Romain Rolland wrote in the 1920s about Vivekananda and Ramakrishna and their contribution to Europe and America. M. Rolland wrote the most beautiful, critical, appreciative biographies of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. He could appreciate the immense dimensions of these two great personalities. He introduces both in *The Life of Ramakrishna* (1970 ed., page 8) in these words :

> " I have chosen two men, who have won my regard because with incomparable charm and power they have realized this splendid symphony of the Universal Soul. They are ... Ramakrishna and

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Vivekananda."

And he ends the *Preface* in these books by saying that Swamiji wanted to unite East and West. He had united them within himself, but externally he wanted to bring harmony between the East and the West, and so he had started digging a tunnel between the East and the West, and he appealed to his Western friends to start digging a tunnel from the West to the East, so that they could meet together in the middle, — this is the language he has used. What tremendous dimension of thought and aspiration you can see in this type of venture, — not just for a community ; not even just for a nation, but for all of humanity he came to give this message of human development and fulfilment. It is no wonder that the West is very much inspired when people there come in touch with Vivekananda literature. Romain Rolland, in his *"Life of Vivekananda,"* describes him as a harmony of all human energy. Every type of energy found a perfect blending in the person and thought of Vivekananda. As decades roll on, we begin to discover these great dimensions of his personality. In the beginning, one may not be able to see more than a few glimpses of that greatness, but he unfolds his personality steadily, decade after decade, as generally do all great men. When they were alive very few people could recognize them. But as years roll on, people realize " what a tremendous person was here ... a few years ago and what a wonderful teaching! And we were influenced thereby." The Buddha's teaching was in Sarnath 2500 years ago to five people, but that Buddha later on became the idol of love and reverence to millions and millions of people in Asia. It was a slow development of understanding. The same thing is happening today in the case of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Sarada Devi. People are understanding slowly. Books are coming out. Plenty of literature is being spread; in other languages also. So a time will come when they will be known in various parts of the world. From a small country, Uruguay in South America, some people came to Calcutta, with much devotion. " We want to get books of Vivekananda and photographs." They said, " We don't get these things in our country." This kind of thing is happening every day. And from this year — September 1993 — will start the centenary of Swamiji's bursting on the Parliament of Religions like a bombshell.

What Swamiji did in the Parliament of Religions was nothing less than to burst 'thought-bombshells'. We need plenty of such 'bombs' today. Our terrorists are bursting bombs and killing people and destroying property. Vivekananda also will 'burst bombs' in the minds of people all over India, and all over the world, but to *create* and *renew* humanity, to make people grow and become fulfilled. that is the type of 'bomb' that are Swami Vivekananda's thoughts.

In the Sept. 1992 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*, published from the Himalayas, Mayavati, there is an article by Professor Hal W. French (he is a Professor at the University of South Carolina in America), on the Parliament of Religions and the tremendous part played by Vivekananda in that Parliament. It is worth studying. Like it, many such articles are coming out. In America itself, professors and stu-

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dents are being drawn to the wonderful personality of Swamiji, his scientific mind, his intense humanism, his complete absence of narrowness and intolerance. But he embodies what India represents — a spirit of harmony. This he represented in the West — *'that'* India — that *'Amar Bharat,'* eternal India. These things are going on now also. In India we need these much more than they in the West. We have to reshape the life of 850 million people, about 200 million of them living very subhuman lives. It's a huge problem. But no problem can stand before the *will*, the pure will and determimnation of a human being. Swamiji gave that inspiration :

"Don't think you are weak; don't think you have not the strength. Infinite strength is in you. Great things will be done through you. Have faith in yourself." And then he added : " The old religion said, ' He or she is an atheist who does not believe in God.' The new Vedanta tells you, ' he or she is an atheist who does not believe in oneself.' Have faith in yourself, then faith in God; then that faith will work."

Till now we never had faith in ourselves, we felt a sense of helplessness, weakness. " I can't do, I can't do," was the constant attitude we had for centuries. He brought the message of Vedanta — *'Atma-sraddha*, — that infinite power is hidden in every human being. In that teaching you find a new focus of worship — the human being himself or herself. God is hidden in every human being. He is not somewhere in the sky far up in space — not at all! He is here in you, next-door to you; in every one He is present. This is the Vedantic teaching. The same Atman is present in every human being. When this teaching becomes the sheet anchor of our national life, of our interhuman relationships, a tremendous revolution will take place in this country — a social, cultural revolution. All these problems will be completely eliminated, by developing that intense strength of manliness.

So he coined two words to describe his message : *Man-making* and *Nation building*. Through *man-making* alone you can build the nation. By mere technical development you can't build the nation. The human being must be built up. The power hidden within must be made to come out. And the capacity to love and to serve must come in the heart of a human being, if you are to achieve real in egration as a nation. So Swamiji summed up India's message to her own children in one sentence : "Renunciation and Service are the twin ideals of India. Intensify her in these channels; the rest will take care of itself. *Tyaga* and *Seva* : you can never do seva without a bit of tyaga. If you want to show a person where some house is, you are to go a little out of the way to show him that house. That is *"tyaga"* renunciation. We left that normal way, that easy way, straight way, and round about we went. So in any aspect of *"seva,"* there *"tyaga"* is present. So these two are the national ideals; let us strengthen India in these directions. These are Swamiji's great words — a message for our people.

(From his speech delivered at the Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad)

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PEACE

Swami Vivekananda

Behold, it comes in might,
The power that is not power,
The light that is in darkness,
The shade in dazzling light.

It is joy that never spoke,
And grief unfelt, profound,
Immortal life unlived,
Eternal death unmourned.

It is not joy nor sorrow,
But that which is between,
It is not night nor morrow,
But that which joins them in.

It is sweet rest in music,
And pause in sacred art;
The silence between speaking;
Between two fits of passion —
It is the calm of heart.

It is beauty never seen,
And love that stands alone,
It is song that lives un-sung,
And knowledge never known.

It is death between two lives,
And lull between two storms,
The void whence rose creation,
And that where it returns.

To it the tear-drop goes,
To spread the smiling form.
It is the Goal of Life,
And peace — its only home!

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VIVEKANANDA: AN APOSTLE OF HINDUISM

Dr. C.R. REDDY

[Late Dr. C.R. Reddy was the first Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University, a well-known educationist a keen debater and scholarly writer known for his sparkling wit and intellect.]

IT WAS ABOUT 1893 that Swami Vivekananada, a beggar in the street, hardly able to convince the doubting Thomases, and even more than the doubting Thomases, the men eaten up with inferiority complex, came to Madras for funds to take him to America, to the Chicago World Congress of Religions. Well, he went, he spoke and, he conquered, as never before. What was there peculiar in that message of Swami Vivekananda that captured the hearts and souls of the West?

I think his very first speech at that Congress struck the note of his Mission. It may be remembered that most of the Western nations are of the Christian persuasion. I speak with much hesitation because I have no right to speak of other religions, and if I fall into error, I hope, it will be attributed to my ignorance and not to ill-feeling. The first principle of a proselytising religion is to proceed on the hypothesis that it and it alone possesses a complete monopoly of the grace of salvation, that it alone can lead you to truth and God and that no other religion could be its equal, even if it be not false. Therefore it tries to convert persons of other faiths to its own, and expand by conversion, which is a form of religious imperialism. Prof. Mahadevan put it in a somewhat different way. He said that they were associated with a person; and everything depended on what he was and did. But I would like to give it a broader outlook and therefore I call them historical religions. They have had a definite beginning and they have their growth and their developments. Now in both these respects Hinduism is different.

It may be that a person may ask " Is there such a thing as Hinduism? " and stop to examine that question. I am not competent to answer. Granting that it is a religion, it can claim two

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special features. It is the first of all religions or religious philosophies that has laid down a great doctrine, the supreme doctrine of univesal benevolence, namely, that there are many ways by which God could be reached, that the different religions, if followed sincerely, took you to the same God and that all religions were equally true, and good and that only conviction was necessary while conversion was not. Sri Ramakrishna's parable puts it in one way; the Bhagavadgita puts it in another. Even as there may be many ways of reaching the upstairs of a house, say by means of different stairs ladders from the front and from the back, or by using a modern lift, which will take you in double the quicker time, if there is no accident in the meanwhile, so too through several different religions all could reach the same God. Rivers taking their rise in different mountains, flowing through different countries and in such flow getting coloured in different ways, empty themselves in the same ocean. " O Partha ", says the Lord in Bhagavadgita " people reach Me through different religions, if followed in all anxiety and sincerity ". That must have caused astonishment to our friends in America. In the robe of a Missionary of Hinduism, he says. " I recognize that Christianity can give you salvation just as much as Hinduism ".

The second thing is, Hinduism, as he put it, is ever-growing, ever-increasing and ever-taking you nearer the fullest truth. It has neither beginning nor end, but co-extensive with rational life. In that sense it is not a historical religion.

The Swamiji received splendid welcome in many homes; and you remember what happened at the World Congress. The Swamiji became so popular that the Chairman, when he found the house emptying after laborious and dull lectures, would say : " Towards the end of the meeting Swami Vivekananda will speak " and that would stop the exodus. When he went to London with that big reputation in America, the London hostesses also welcomed him and inspite of our political inferiority treated him with unreserved consideration and honour. The India Office was near. Naturally he visited it. Whatever might have been the nature of the climate, the atmosphere there too was very good. The result was that he mistook it all for the reception of his Vedanta and not the reception of Vivekananda, a proof of his modesty. Later he discovered that all these material antagonisms of races and nations could not be solved by spiritual prescriptions and that we must be a first class nation and power if we must make ourselves respected and if our rights and religions are to be honoured. In the end came the large synthesis wrought by his genius of which the embodiments are the Belur Mutt in Calcutta and more especially the Ramakrishna Missions with

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all their branches and hostels and schools as in Madras and the relief and uplift work organized on a non-sectarian basis, extending help and charity to Hindu, Muslim, Christian and all. This is practical Vedanta, the Vedanta of life as well as of the soul.

Years ago, before I returned from Cambridge in 1907 Swami Vivekananda the great, died at the early age of 39. I suppose there is something in the great proverb " Those whom the gods love, die young ". My first speech happened to be on Vivekananda, and I characterized him then as the greatest synthetic thinker that India had produced. In Gokhale, Naoriji, Pherozsha Mehta, and Malavyaji, we had splendid politicians, in Ashutosh Mukerji and Malavyaji we had noble educational organizers, in Dayanand we had a mind which revived Vedic Hinduism and in the greatest apostles of all time who in his own life illustrated the highest spiritual virtues. Ramakrishna is the embodiment of what might be called the harmony of all religions that it is the pride of India not merely to preach, but to practise. Those who have read the life of Sri Ramakrishna know how for sometime he actually embraced Islam, and realized God that way; how again he practised Christianity and realized God that way too. He had direct experience of the equal truth and grace of all religions. But to Vivekananda belongs the further honour of having seen life and religion in all their aspects economical, educational, social, and political, life is one and religion cannot be isolated beyond a certain limit.

A living religion spreads. If it is universal in its scope, it cannot rest being tribal or racial, but must embrace all humanity. So Vivekandanda felt that he had a message to the West. He organized the Missions which are now functioning in America and in Europe, in the true Ramakrishna spirit. I was in San-Francisco. Naturally I visited the beautiful building in which the Ramakrishna Ashram is housed. It is their own property. Americans give you plenty of money even when they do not believe, just as even when we believe we don't. In New York and everywhere they attracted large audiences. So the message of Hinduism is of permanent and universal value. Reason appeals to all, whereas authority cannot. The core of Hinduism is philosophy lived. The Hindu missionary need not base his appeal on what was said by any prophet or what was written in their books. He has to give reasons for the teaching of Rishis and appeal to the head as well as the heart. In this method, the mastermind is Vivekananda.

Being therefore a dynamic religion in which all fresh elements of knowledge and new methods of approach are assimilated, Hinduism has a permanent and ever-growing mission.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S VOYAGE FOR THE WORLD'S PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

SRI SWAMI GAHANANANDA

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S Voyage for the World's Parliament of Religions on 31st May, 1893 heralded an important decade in the history of mankind. Swamiji wanted integration of mankind through acceptance of all religions as true. The decade 1993-2002 may, therefore, be observed as the " DECADE OF INTEGRATION OF MANKIND, 1993-2002 ", and as the centenaries of all the important events in the life of Swami Vivekananda falling within this period — i.e., his appearance in the World's Parliament of Religions, his return to India, the setting up of the Ramakrishna Mission and so on, — all may be celebrated for the spreading of Swamiji's messages. The following calls given by Swamiji at the final session of the World's Parliament of Religions, on 27th September 1893, may be regarded as his calls for the " DECADE OF INTEGRATION OF MANKIND, 1993-2002. " :

1) Help and not Fight.

2) Assimilation and not Destruction.

3) Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.

Swami Vivekananda's appearance before the World's Parliament of Religions in September 1893 was a momentous occasion for India, nay, for the entire world, as Swamiji put before the World's Parliament of Religions the message of acceptance of all religions as true, which was new to the world. Besides, apart from appearing before the World's Parliament of Religions, Swamiji also played the role of a wandering religious teacher in the West. This brought glory to India, as the rest of the world thus became aware of the spiritual wealth of India. The Centenary of Swami Vivekananda's appearance before the World's Parliament of Religions is being celebrated not only in India, but also in many other places of the world.

After concluding his Bharat Parikrama, Swamiji sailed for the U.S.A. on 31st May, 1893 to appear before the World's Parliament of Religions. This was, therefore, a very significant day for not only India, but also for the entire world. Swamiji undertook this voyage for the World's Parliament of Religions after receiving Sri Ramakrishna's command in a divine vision.

During his Bharat Parikrama, Swami Vivekananda not only discovered the spiritual wealth of India, but also the misery and deprivation from

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which his countrymen had been suffering. That is why he said, — " The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted —let these be your God; know that service to these alone is the highest religion. " He went to say : " I love the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden, I feel for them — the Lord knows how much. "

He not only loved his countrymen, but also immensely loved his motherland. Sister Nivedita has described Swami Vivekanda's love for his motherland in the following words :

"He told us how he had longed, when in the West, to stand once more at dusk some little way outside an Indian village and hear again the evening calls — the noise of children growing sleepy at their play, the evening bells, the cries of the herdsmen and the half-veiled sound of voices through the quickly-passing twilight. How homesick he had been ... "

This love for his country and his countrymen made him a great patriot. Fighters for freedom of the country and politicians drew inspiration from his writings and speeches. It is with this patriotism that he wrote to Swami Ramakrishnananda from the U.S.A. : " As our country is poor in social virtues, so this country is lacking in spirituality. I give them spirituality, and they give me money. " Swami Vivekandanda did not need the money for himself; he needed the money for the poor and downtrodden in his motherland. This love for his country and countrymen prompted him to say in the World's Parliament of Religions on 20th September, 1893 : " ... the crying evil in the East is not religion — they have religion enough — but it is bread that the suffering millions of burning India cry out for with parched throats. "

Swami Vivekandanda's Voyage to America on 31st May 1893 to appear before the World's Parliament of Religions and to play the role of a wandering religious teacher was not an isolated event. The preparation for this significant event had been going on for long.

Left to himself, Swamiji would have liked to remain deeply in meditation. Sri Ramakrishna, however, had already earmarked his role in this world. When Swamiji expressed that his highest ambition was to remain always in meditation, Sri Ramakrishna told him, " I thought you had been born for something greater, my boy !"

When Sri Ramakrishna was lying critically ill in Cossipore Garden House, he was training his disciples for their future roles. On one of these days Sri Ramakrishna asked for a piece of paper and wrote on it that " Naren (later Swami Vivekananda) will teach others. " Not only that, three or four days before Sri Ramakrishna left his mortal body, he called Swami Vivekananda (then Naren) and asked to be left alone with him. What happened thereafter has been described by Romain Rolland in his book, " The Life of Ramakrishna. " According to this description, Sri Ramakrishna " looked lovingly at Naren and passed into ecstasy. It enveloped Naren in its folds. When he came back from the shadows, he saw Ramakrishna in tears." Romain Rolland has added that Sri Ramakrishna then told him, " Today I have given you my all and am now only a poor fakir, possessing nothing. By this power you will do immense good in the world and not until it is accomplished will you return."

This is the power, with which Swami Vivekananda completed his Bharat Parikrama and then sailed for

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the U.S.A. to attend the World's Parliament of Religions and perform the role of a wandering religious teacher in the West.

Such was the power passed on to him by Sri Ramakrishna that sometime before his voyage to U.S.A. he told a brother disciple, " I feel a mighty power ! It is as if I were about to blaze forth. There are so many powers in me ! It seems to me as if I could revolutionize the world. "

It is, therefore, no wonder that he appeared before the World's parliament of Religions, nay, before the entire spiritual world as a blaze and became an instant success. He himself had written in a letter to his brother disciples from the U.S.A. : " ... whatever comes to my lips — Gurudeva backs me up. " In an earlier letter he wrote from the U.S.A. to Swami Ramakrishnananda, a brother disciple : " I am an instrument, and He is the operator. Through this instrument He is rousing the religious instinct in thousands of hearts in this far-off country. "

In response to the welcome on the 11th September 1893 at the World's Parliament of Religions, Swami Vivekananda addressed the people of America as "Sisters and Brothers of America " which had an electrifying effect on the people of that country. Not only that, he went on to pronounce : " We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true " — this was a new message to the Western World — " acceptance of all religions are true."

Swamiji pointed out to the august Assembly on 19th September 1893, in his paper on *" Hinduism "* : " Unity in variety is the plan of nature, and the Hindu has recognised it. " He went on to say in the final session of the Parliament of Religions : " ... if any one here hopes that this unity will come by the triumph of any one of the religions and the destruction of the others, to him I say, ' Brother, your's is an impossible hope.' " He went on to clarify : " The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth. " And then he declared : " ... holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any chruch in the world, and ... every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance : ' Help and not Fight, ' ' Assimilation and not Destruction, ' ' Harmony and Peace and not Dissension. ' "

Swami Vivekananda put forward the concept of a Universal Religion before the Parliament, saying that it would be one " ... which will have no location in place or time; which will be infinite like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be Brahminic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have infinite space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for, every human being. ... " Subsequently, he went to say : " What I want to propagate is a religion that will be acceptable to all

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minds; it must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystic, and equally conducive to action."

To swami Vivekananda, "Religion is realisation; not talk nor doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes, " and, " the end of all religions is the realising of God in the soul. That is the Universal religion. If there is one universal truth in all religions, I place it there — in realizing God. Ideals and methods may differ, but that is the central point. "

Swami Vivekananda wanted religion to be subjected to the same methods of investigation as are applied to sciences. He said : " Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason, through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation, which we apply to sciences and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of religion? In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of opinion that the sooner it is done the better. ...Not only will it be made scientific — as scientific, at least, as any of the conclusions of physics or chemistry — but will have greater strength, because physics or chemistry has no internal mandate to vouch for its truth, which religion has. "

Why did he want religion to be subjected to such investigation? He wanted this because the purpose of religion is realisaton of God. That is the absolute goal. In Swami Vivekananda's words : " God is Truth " and " ...the absolute truth is only one. " As such, religion which leads to this absolute truth will certainly withstand the scientific investigations to satisfy the modern minds.

Swami Vivekananda's voyage to U.S.A. to attend the World's Parliament of Religions and for performing the role of a wandering religious teacher in the West had a mission; his mission was to integrate mankind by arousing spirituality in them and by spreading the message of acceptance of all religions as true.

The world had already heard of the need for religious co-operation, religious unity and religious tolerance. These are all laudable objectives. But all these have a limit, a breaking point; they do not last for all time.

Sri Ramakrishna has given us the message of "As many faiths, so many paths ." Once this message is realised, acceptance of all the religions as true follows. Acceptance has no limit. So, with acceptance of all the religions as true, the cause of conflict vanishes. That is the need of the hour, when the world is afflicted with violence and strife. With Spirituality aroused in us, let us march forward, with the acceptance of religions as true, to the truth that " The one thing unchangeable is God. " That is the only way to integrate mankind and thus to make the world a better place to live in, and fulfil the mission of Swami Vivekananda. In the words of Swami Vivekananda : " God helps them that help themselves " Let us help ourselves in fulfilling the mission of Swami Vivekananda.

– Courtesy All India Radio, Delhi ❑

" Man, therefore, according to the Vedanta philosophy, is the greatest being that is in the universe, and this world of work the best place in it, because only herein is the greatest and best chance for him to become perfect. "

– Swami Vivekananda

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE FUTURE OF INDIA

DR. K. VENKATASUBRAMANIAN

In December 1892, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock at Kanyakumari, where the three seas meet, Swami Vivekananda dived into deep meditation and came to a clear conclusion about the work that lay ahead. From Kanyakumari, walking most of the way, he arrived in Madras in January, 1893.

Swamiji was moved by the great earnestness of the devotees — particularly the young men — of Madras, and their enthusiasm to send him to attend the Chicago Parliament of Religions. He had great hopes in the people of Tamil Nadu, in a letter from America, he wrote feelingly :

" My blessings on all. Tell all the noble souls in Madras who have helped our cause that I send them my eternal love and gratitude ..."

Today, a hundred years have rolled by since Swamiji's first visit to South India. This is the time for us to look within, renew ourselves with the inspiration his words give and rededicate ourselves to the task he set before us.

The lectures that Swami Vivekananda delivered from Colombo to Almora after his return from the West carried a special significance as they reflected not only his spiritual realisation, but also his secular experience in the West. It was in Colombo that he delivered his first public lecture on January 15, 1897, while returning to India from the West. After Colombo, he delivered public lectures at Jaffna, Pamban, Rameshwaram, Ramnad, Paramakudi and other places as he was moving towards the north of India via Madras and Calcutta. In all his lectures, he emphasised (1) the role of religion in India, (2) the distinction between the essentials and the non-essentials in Hinduism, (3) the oneness of reality and the different approaches thereto, (4) upliftment of the masses through education and culture and (5) the futility of secular knowledge without spiritual knowledge. The future of India as envisaged by Swamiji must be based upon these basic principles and he suggested a plan of campaign with a view to realising the goal.

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While delivering a lecture at the Victoria Hall in Madras, Swami Vivekananda highlighted, for example, the special significance of religion in the Indian context. His thesis was that, like every individual, every nation has its own speciality and it is necessary to develop it to the full to derive the maximum benefit out of it. In the words of the Swami : " I see that each nation, like each individual, has one theme in this life, which is its centre, the principal note round which every other note comes to form the harmony ... In India, religious life forms the centre, the key-note of the whole music of national life, and if any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality — the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries — that nation dies if it succeeds in the attempt." So, all reformers, planners and political and social leaders should bear this in mind when they formulate any scheme of action for the betterment of India. If they fail to do, their endeavour, according to Swamiji, will be in vain.

A distinction has to be made between the essentials and the non-essentials in every religion. This is as much true with regard to Hinduism as it is with regard to other religions. The " essential " principles are those which abide forever. They are perennial for the simple reason that they are, declares Swami Vivekananda, " built upon the nature of man, the nature of the soul, the soul's relation to God, the nature of God, perfection, and so on." The " non-essentials " of a religion are concerned with the day-to-day practices, religious observances, and so on which vary from time to time and place to place. In the case of Hinduism, this distinction between the " essentials " and the " non-essentials " is based upon the distinction between the teachings of Sruthi and those of Smriti. According to Swami Vivekananda, religious quarrels arise when people, ignoring the " essentials ", pay attention only to the "non- essentials."

Swami Vivekananda was never tired of repeating one of the central teachings of Sruthi — " That which exists is one; sages call it by various names." Supreme reality, which is by definition infinite, eternal, immutable, must be one. It makes no sense to speak of a plurality of reality. However, this supreme reality, can be spoken about in different ways, as Siva, Vishnu, God, the Absolute and so on. Whatever be the name that one uses, it refers to the same reality. Also, this reality, according to Swamiji, can be approached in different ways. The example that his Master, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, used to give, is relevant here. There are many steps in the four directions of the tank to reach the water in it. Whatever be the direction through which people proceed to reach the water, the one and the same water is attained by all of them. Even so, there are many paths to one and the same ultimate reality. It is against this background that one must try to understand the differences, for example, between non-dualism and dualism. If one realises that the core of all religions is the same, there will be, according to Swamiji, religious har-

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mony. To quote Swamiji : " That is religion which makes us realise the unchangeable one, and that is the religion for everyone."

Reference has already been made to the lecture that the Swami delivered at the Victoria Hall, Madras, in which he outlined his plan of action. That service to the people — the poor and the down-trodden — is service to God, is one of the basic principles of the practical Vedanta of Swami Vivekananda. Nothing short of radical reform, says Swamij, will help India to progress. What is urgently required is education for the poor and the downtrodden and unless the education of the masses is taken care of, the country will not progress. To the question, " Why does not the nation move?" Swami Vivekananda's answer is : " First, educate the nation." Reformation of the superstructure is no reformation at all. On the contrary, reformation of the substructure is real reformation. Going down to the basis of the thing, to the very root of the matter — this is what Swamiji called " radical reform." It is a pity that this first step in what Swamiji characterised as " My plan of Action " has not been taken care of and fully implemented even after the independence of the country. The problem of " adult illiteracy " will not stare at us today if every child born after independence had been given the benefit of education. Mere talk will not do. Reform calls for action and not for talk. The Swamiji has nothing but contempt for those who would talk and not act.

If the upliftment of the masses has to be achieved only through education, then what kind of education is needed? According to Swami Vivekananda, " The gems of spirituality that are stored up in our books " have to be made available to the masses, have to be the common property of all. Swamiji was convinced that for achieving this, Sanskrit education was necessary for all. Mere economic and social upliftment without cultural upliftment will not help the masses. In the words of Swamiji : " Teach the masses in the vernaculars ; give them ideas ; they will get information ; but something more is necessary ; give them culture. Until you give them that, there can be no performance in the raised condition of the masses."

In the course of his talk on " The Future of India," Swami Vivekananda draws a distinction between the right type of education for the cultural upliftment of the masses and the wrong one which does not promote cultural upliftment. Ideal education, according to Swamiji, is life-building, man-making, and character-making, and cultural upliftment can be achieved only through ideal education. Commenting on the present day education, Swami Vivekananda observed : " In the first place, it is not man-making education ; it is merely and entirely a negative education. A negative education or any training that is based on negation, is worse than death. The child is taken to school, and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool ; the second thing, that his grandfather is a lunatic ; the third

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thing, that all his teachers are hypocrites ; the fourth, that all the sacred books are lies! By the time he is sixteen, he is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless ..."

What, then, is the alternative to this negative education ? According to Swami Vivekananda, we must think in terms of life-building, man-making and character-making education as the alternative. The Swami spells out what we should avoid and also what we should aim at in our education. He says : " If education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages in the world, and the encyclopaedias are the Rishis. The ideals, therefore, is that we must have to whole education of our country spiritual and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as practical."

This observation of Swamiji requires careful consideration. Swamiji refers to (1) the content, (2) the administration, (3) the scope and (4) the method of education in this statement. An educational system which is satisfactory in all these four aspects can be looked upon as the ideal one. Let us first consider the content of education. Swamiji is against the dichotomy between secular and spiritual education. Secular education, however useful, will not be beneficial when it is divorced from spiritual education. On the basis of the Upanishadic distinction between the pleasant (Preyas) and the good (Sreyas), we could say that, while secular education is concerned with the former, spiritual education aims at the latter. If we impart only one of these two, that is, either secular or spiritual education, we are not providing according to Swami Vivekananda, whole education. As for educational administration, Swamiji says that it must be " in our own hands." It means that Swami Vivekananda was against the foreigners controlling and administering the educational set-up in India. We must have total freedom in educational administration. Thirdly, education should foster national spirit ; it should be conducive to the development of the ideal of unity of the nation. Swami Vivekananda quotes one of the Rigveda texts which says : " Be thou all of one mind, be thou all of one thought ..." Commenting on this text, he says that " Being of one mind is the secret of society."

Lastly, the methods of education should be national. The methods that an educationist follows should be suitable to the people to whom education is imparted. It will not be helpful to import the methods which are successful elsewhere. Our education will be ideal, i.e., will be life-building, man-making, and character-making, only if we have control over the content, administration, scope and method of education. ❑

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VIVEKANANDA'S PLAN FOR INDIA

RAJNI BAKSHI

" At Cape Comorin sitting in Mother Kumari's temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock — I hit upon a plan : We are so many sanyasis wandering about, and teaching the people metaphysics — it is all madness. did not our Gurudeva use to say, ' An empty stomach is no good for religion."

The athletic young sanyasi sat perfectly still on an off-shore rock at Kanyakumari. Steeped in deep meditation he seemed to have reached a realm beyond time, space and the tingling salt spray of crashing ocean waves. This image, of Swami Vivekananda at the rock that now bears his name, is one of modern India's most enduring legends.

The glare of adulation has tended to obscure the tumultuous human struggles of that legendary persona. And these struggles are the clue to why, a century later, Swami Vivekananda and his plans for India inspire people across the ideological spectrum.

Let us journey back a hundred years to see what bothered Vivekananda and served as an impetus for his sense of mission.

Wandering as a pilgrim, from the Himalayas to India's southern most tip, Swami Vivekananda saw : " A country where millions of people live on flowers of the mohua plant, and a million or two of sadhus and a hundred million or so of Brahmins suck the blood out of the poor people, without even the least effort for their amelioration — is that a country or hell? Is that a religion, or the devil's dance?"

So he resolved to undo these injustices and revitalise India by saving religion from those who made it a " devil's dance." But this ambitious aspiration had to contend with global forces that were beyond any single man's influence.

Looming large over the threshold of the 20th century, Swami Vivekananda saw " modern western science dazzling the eyes with the brilliancy of myriad suns and driving in the chariot of hard and fast facts." By the late 19th century western materialism and colonialisam had come to dominate the world. By comparison the Indian civilisational endeavour seemed to have atrophied. The colonial encounter had the self-confidence of Indian society as never before.

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In addition the efforts of Christian missionaries to convert " heathens" had triggered anxieties within sections of Hindu society. Swami Vivekananda's self-defined task was to simultaneously eliminate the evils in Hindu practice and also reaffirm the value of the tradition. Thus he felt compelled to assert that "Hinduism is not a mistake." Herein lay one of his most intense struggles. As a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and a diligent spiritual aspirant Swami Vivekananda sought the essentials of Hindusim in pure spirituality. As an activist entangled in the throes of history, he sought the common bases of Hindusim in order to unify its diverse strains. The insights of Vedanta provided these common bases and gave the Swami a means of synthesising his inner quest and his wordly mission.

The essence of this mission was to demystify spritual truths — bringing them out of the monastries and the hold of priest-craft. Since the objective was to retrieve the highest ideals of the existing religion, Swami Vivekananda placed the greatest onus for this revitalisation on orthodox Hindus. He held them responsible for the fact that essential principles had languished over the centuries and decayed internally. What were these essentials?

Religion, Vivekananda said over and over again, is realisation. Rituals, colours, Mantras and idols may help, but these were not the essentials of a spiritual life. for, he said, "If your heart has not opened, if you have not realised God, it is all in vain". And purification of the heart requires "worship of the Virat — of all those around us."

Religion and spirituality, so defined, was in Vivekananda's view the common ground for the amalgam of cultures in India. And restoring health to these essentials of religion was, for the Swami, a necessary prerequisite for the rejuvenation of India.

All these convictions added up not to one but many ' plans.' There had to be a " man-making " education, both spiritual and scientific, that would give strength to the people. Additionally, for the making of a great future India required " organisation, accumulation of power, coordination of wills."

But when he arose from his meditation on the rock at Kanyakumari the high tide of ideas was also accompained by a dogged restlessness. He was not sure exactly how all this would add up to both, filling empty stomachs and saving religion. Besides, all plans demanded selfless dedicated workers and funds. The wandering mendicant had a few followers but no funds. So he decided to go to America to spread the message of Indian sprituality and earn money.

Behind the glitter of western affluence Swami Vivekananda sensed another kind of decay and crisis. So he saw himself as a missionary who must seek a mutually enriching synthesis of eastern and western thought. But would preaching " the incomparable glory of the Vedas and the Vedanta " necessarily be compatible with his goal of fostering universal religion? For Vivekananda, the two were one and the same. His notion of " conquering " the world with spirituality was based on the faith that " love must conquer hatred, hatred cannot conquer itself."

Thus bursting with " a tremendous power and energy" Vivekananda set forth on the solitary voyage to America and the Parliament of Religions where history waited to test his faith.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA INSPIRES THE YOUTH

R.N. LAKHOTIA

The life and message of Swami Vivekananda is highly inspired for the youth. His writings compiled in eight volumes of "The Complete Works" (CW), contain several articles with a universal and inspiring message for the youth. It is exactly a hundred years ago that Swami Vivekananda achieved world fame by his historic address at the Parliament of Religious at Chicago which began from 11 september, 1893. As a representative of the Hindu religion, he exhibited great self-confidence and faith in his own religion, which is to be emulated by all. The youth in particular, would be happy to know that in the afternoon of 11 September 1893, when the Chairman of the Parliament invited him to present his views and when he started his address with " Sisters and Brothers of America," it overtook the entire Parliament by a great storm of enthusiasm. Throughout the whole Assembly, there was a great thrill. Hundreds upon hundreds rose to their feet and sent up deafening notes of applause over and over again. He could not believe that it was he they were applauding. Swamiji attempted to speak for over two minutes but the great enthusiasm of the audience prevented him and when silence was restored, Swamiji began his address. He quoted two beautiful passages from the scriptures of Hinduism. His speech voiced the spirit of the Parliament. Swamiji presented his speech on Hinduism on 19 September and stirred all people by his self-confidence and mastery of the subject and by giving the universal message of Hinduism. This is a great lesson for the youth who feel shy in feeling proud of their own religion. In fact, Swamiji said, " Holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any Church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character ". Thus, Swamiji gave the message of universal religion of Vedanta as the universal religion by giving the slogan: " Harmony and peace and not dissension ".

Swamiji 's Respect for Parents

Swamiji believed that the youth should have great respect for their parents and elders. He wanted the youth to show special regard to their mothers. In fact, he felt that the position of the mother is highest in the world as it is the one place in which one can learn to exercise the greatest

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unselfishness. His views on parents are particularly to be noted by the youth who unfortunately, are increasingly disobeying their parents. This is what Swamiji said:

> "Before parents one must not utter jokes, must not show restlessness, must not show anger or temper. Before mother or father, a child must bow down low, and stand up in their presence, and must not take a seat until they order him to sit ". (CW-1, 43)

Non-violence

It is often seen that youth in particular become violent at times. What is required is toleration and the practice of the principles of Ahimsa or non-injury to others. Swamiji 's message to youth on Ahimsa is :

> " Never producing pain by thought, word, and deed, in any living being, is that is called Ahimsa, non-injury. There is no happiness higher than what a man obtains by this attitude of non-offensiveness, to all creation ". (CW-1, 189).

Purity

It cannot be gainsaid that purity of chracter is one of the greatest virtues to be imbibed by all in general and the youth in particular. We should not see evil in others. It is said that we cannot see evil unless we see ourselves with an evil mind. Swamiji wanted the people to be chaste and pure and to do noble things. Here is the message of Swamiji:

> "Nothing is gained except by sacrifice...The holiest function of our human consciousness, the noblest, do not make it unclean! Do not degrade it to the level of the brutes...Make yourselves decent men! Be chaste and pure! " (CW-1, 520).

Pure Food

It is often found that increasingly more and more youth are turning away from pure and sattvic food to impure and non-vegetarian food. It is contained in our scriptures that the nature of man is essentially vegetarian and the nature has made man essentially vegetarian. We should not kill or injure any animal for the sake of taste or gratification of the senses. If we want to be spiritual in the true sense and believe that God pervades in all beings and exists in all, then we have no right to injure any creature and hence, eggs and other non-vegetarian food should be avoided. food should be avoided. This is what Swamiji said on the question of food habits:

> " All exciting food should be avoided, as meat, for instance; this should not be taken because it is by its very nature impure. We can get it only by taking the life of another. we get pleasure for a moment, and another creature has to give up its life to give us that pleasure. Not only so, but we demoralise other human beings." (CW-4, 4).

Strength

The youth must pay attention to health and having strength of body, mind and character. In fact, religion comes afterwards. Swamiji always felt that the Gita can be understood with our biceps and our muscles, a little stronger. He also said that the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna can be understood by us better with a little of strong blood in us.

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Therefore, he wanted the youth in particular to be strong. Quoting the Upanisads, he said that it was the only literature in the world where we could find the word "Abhih" (fearlessness) used again and again. The following message of Swamiji must be imbibed by every young person in the country:

> " Make your nerves strong. What we want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel. we have wept long enough. No more weeping, but stand on your feet and be men. It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want." (CW-3, 224)

Hindu Pride

Swamiji felt that the youth in particular should read the Gita and other good works of Vedanta. In his opinion, the system of education was wrong, because the mind is crammed with facts before it knows how to think. Besides, Swamiji was of the view that the foundation of the society lay in renunciation. Therefore, he wanted the youth to renounce all temptations to take neighbour's property, to put hands upon neighbour, and the pleasure of cheating others by telling lies. These are the teachings of Hindu religion, and he wanted every Hindu to be proud of being a Hindu. But at the same time, he wanted that all people should respect other religions because these are different paths to God-realisation. He believed in universal religion, of seeing God in everyone and not having a narrow - minded approach. A true Hindu will be an asset to society. He does not harm anyone. He respects other 's religion, and therefore, he wanted every Hindu to be proud of his religion. This is what he said:

> " I am proud to call myself a Hindu, I am proud that I am one of your unworthy servants. I am proud that I am a countryman of yours, you the descendants of the sages, you the descendants of the most glorious Rishis the world ever saw. Therefore, have faith in yourselves, be proud of your ancestors, instead of being ashamed of them." (CW-3, 381)

These are some of the views of Swami Vivekananda. If the modern youth imbibe the great virtues of self-confidence, renunciation, purity, non-violence and service to others as preached and exemplified by the glorious life of Swami Vivekananda, the life of the modern youth would be much better for themselves as also for society. ❑

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VIVEKANANDA, THE POET

Dr. S.V. JOGA RAO

Much has been said of Vivekananda's greatness as saint and philosopher but, curiously enough, the fact that he is a poet of the first order does not seem to have received much attention.

The content of all his poems is nothing but a synthesis of the poetic thought of the ancient saints and the saintly vision of kindred bards. Vivekananda is the name given to him by his Guru who gave him the vision too. The epithet has earned a name for him and proved itself to be an apt combination of terms on account of its association with him. All good poetry or great philosophy is the manifestation of "Viveka culminating in "Ananda". In fact, this kind of philosophy and poetry are the spring of his inspiration.

"The cloud puts forth its deluge strength
When lightning cleaves its breast:
When the soul is stirred to its inmost depth
Great ones unfold their best."

One day during 1895, while he was staying in the Thousand Island Park at New York, he was lecturing to his pupils in his spiritual training camp on Sanyasa and its welcome experiences. Suddenly something srtuck him and he left the class quite unceremoniously and in no time a memorable melody came out of him and that is the famous " Song fo the Sanyasin ". It begins as follows:

" Wake up the note ! the song that had its birth Far off, where wordly taint could never reach; In mountain caves, and glades of forest deep, whose calm no sigh for lust or wealth or fame could ever dare to break, where rolled the stream of knowledge, truth and bliss that follows both.

Sing high that note, Sanyasin bold ! Say
Om Tat Sat Om !"

He projected in it a colourful picture with a rich background. Kali to him is not the threefoot idol at Dakshineswara, but something more, the Omnipotent Power behind the threeworlds and the Trinity. He understands her as Time-incarnate. He had the chance of her sight before, through the medium of his Guru. Sister Nivedita says, no sooner did he finish the song than he fell down to the ground in a fit of ecstatic emotion. He ob-

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serves in another of his poems:

" Perchance the shining sage
Saw more than he could tell
Who knows, what soul and when
The Mother makes her throne?"

This aptly applies to him also.

He presents the document of his self-realisation as follows:

Before the sun, the moon, the earth
Before the stars or comets free
Before e'en Time had its birth
I was, I am and I will be."

Here, in this, " The Song of the Free," we clearly see thought and diction are well in a race with each other.

He sees God in man, nay, in the nerve of every living being and in one song proclaims the love of all beings to be the best worship :

"These are his manifold forms before thee,
Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?
Who loves all beings, without distinction,
He indeed is worshipping best his God."

In another, he warns the fools, who neglect the living God, worshipping mute idols :

" Ye fools ! who neglect the living God,
And his infinite reflections with which the world is full,
While ye run after imaginary shadows,
That lead alone to fights and quarrels,
Him worship the only visible !
Break all other idols !"

All this is not a mere platitude. It forms the very core of his nature. He is a man of action, a dynamic personality. Vivekananda is another name for Philosophy practised. I describe the great " Sadhana " he made, in his own poetic language.

"Listen friend, I will speak my heart of thee,
I have found in my life this truth,
Buffeted by waves, in this whirl of life
There is one ferry that takes across the sea,
Formulas of worship, control of breath,
Science, philosophy, systems varied,
Relinquishment, possession, and the like,
All these are delusions of the mind ;
Love, Love that's the one thing, the Sole treasure."

This is the net result of all the endeavour of the great saints, Vivekananda or another. This Jermon of love is their perpetual message to mankind.

The Swami has given us yet another sermon, the sermon of peace in terms more clearly defined and with a better refinement of poetic setting. I quote a few lines here :

"It is not joy nor sorrow,
But that which is in between;
It is sweet rest in music ;
And pause in sacred art ;
Between two fits of passion
It is the calm of heart ;
It is beauty never seen,
And love that stands alone,
The void whence rose creation,
And that where it returns;
It is the goal of life,
And peace – its only home!"

(Contd from Page 46)

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THE TONGUE OF FLAME

T.C.A. RAMANUJAM

" So many of us are mere talents, clever children in the play of life, that when genius stands in our presence we can only bow down before it as an act of God, a continuance of creation. Such men are the very life-blood of history, to which politics and industry are but frame and bones."
— Will Durant.

It is 100 years since Swami Vivekananda delivered his immortal address at the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893. At 10.30 AM that day in September 1893, ten strokes of the new Liberty Bell, each stroke representing one of the ten chief religions represented in the Parliament — Judnaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Zoroastrianism, Catholicism and Protestatism — announced the opening of the Parliament. Thrice, Swami Vivekananda was called upon to speak, each time he said, " no " " not yet ", until the Chairman was puzzled and wondered if he would speak at all. Whereas all the speakers had come prepared and came with ready-made speeches, Swami Vivekananda had made no preparations but bowed down to Devi Saraswathi in the afternoon and addressed the audience, " Brothers and Sisters of America." The audience was electrified and rose to its feet to applaud him continuously for two minutes.

In the words of his biographer, Sailendra Nath Dhar, " He greeted the youngest of the nations in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world, the Vedic order of Sannyasis, a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. He quoted from the Gita, " Akasham patitam toyam yatha gatchamati sagaram. Sarvadeva namaskaram kesavam pratdigatchati " and explained, " as the different streams having their source in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O! Lord, the different paths which men take, through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee." The sense of universality of the speech captured the continent of America. Said Romain Rolland, " It was like a tongue of flame among the

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grey wastes of cold dissertation, it fired the souls of the listening throng."

As the patriotic monk of India landed in Chicago, he was faced with the twin problems of finance and recognition. Mendicancy was unknown to USA. He was not aware of the formalities and credentials necessary to enter the Parliament of Religions in September, 1893. Sister Nivedita commented, " Nothing could have been more typical of the unorganizedness of Hinduism itself than this going forth of its representative unannounced, and without further credentials, to enter the strongly guarded doors of the world's wealth and power." Seeing him in penury and trouble, the Theosophists, (whom he had rebuffed when they offered to support him if only he embraced their school of philosophy) gleefully gloated. " Now the Devil is going to die; God bless us all " (Mrs. Annie Besant was present on the dais when Vivekananda rose to speak). It was prof. J.H. Wright of Harvard, who came to the rescue of the Swami both with finance and authority and facilitated his easy attendance at the Parliament. It was only on 2nd September 1893 that he got intimation about his admission.

The Parliament met thrice daily for 17 days and Vivekananda delivered 8 lectures in the Scientific Section of the Parliament. He emphasised the all-inclusiveness of Hinduism which covered within its sweep different shades of religious thoughts from absolute monism to the lowest idolatry. The Vedas are not books but represented " a treasury of spiritual laws " which existed even before they were discovered, like Newton's law of gravity. He gave a message that was novel and refreshing to his American audience. "Hear, ye children of immortal bliss ! Even ye that reside in higher spheres! The Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth, not sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep ; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal ; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies ; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter."

The Christian missionaries were aghast. The Christian Literature Society came up with a pamphlet shouting. " The Swami by his denial of sin, shows that he knows nothing of true religion and that he is a teacher of deadly sin. Woe! Woe! Woe! To those who follow a blind guide to their own destruction." The message, however, was enthusiastically received by the thousands of Christians in the audience and a poem appeared in a journal,

> " Then I heard Th'handsome
> Hindu monk, drest up in
> orange dress,
>
> Who said that all humanity was
> part of God — no less,
>
> An' he said we are not sinners,
> so I comfort took, once more
> while th' Parl'ment of Religions
> roared with approving roar."
>
> — Aunt Hannah on the
> Parliament of Religions.

The Swami concluded his speech by holding out the idea of a universal religion, having no temporary, spatial or sectarian bounds embracing in its

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catholicity. Every human being, from the lowest grovelling savage, not far removed from the brute, to the highest man towering by the virtues of his head and heart, above humanity.

After the address, the wandering mendicant from India had become some sort of a celebrity overnight. But at the same time, as he retired the first night after the Chicago address and lay upon his bed, the terrible contrast between poverty-stricken India and the opulent America dawned upon him irresistibly. All the adulation showered on him in USA only agonised him and he cried out, " O! Mother ! What shall I do with name and fame when my motherland remains sunk in the utmost penury? Who will raise the masses in India, show me O! Mother, how I can help them?" It was this agony that was responsible for the founding of the Ramakrishna Mission and Ramakrishna Mutt.

In yet another address at Chicago entitled, "Religion Not the Crying Need for India," he emphasised, "It is an insult to a starving people to offer them religion." He regarded modern science as the manifestation of religious spirit for it sought to understand truth by its sincere efforts. This universe has not been created by any extra-cosmic God, nor is it the work of any outside genius. It is self-creating, self-dissolving, self-manifesting, one infinite existence, the Brahma ", The Vedic ideal was to see God in man and this was the real God vision, man is the greatest of all," so thundered Vivekananda from the pulpits of the Parliament of Religions. The message of the Upanishad, according to him, was fearlessness and scientific reasoning power. For India, he gave the prescription : " What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and the secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face."

He inculcated the religion of patriotism, patriotism as a religion of humanity. "May I be born and reborn and suffer a thousand miseries if only I worship the only God in whom I believe ; the sum total of all souls and above all my God, the wicked, my God, he afflicted my God, the poor of all races."

Louis Fisher in his " Life of Mahatma Gandhi " observed, " each nation fashions its intellect according to its own ethos. Ancient Rome produced jurists ; Greece had its demogogues ; Russia produced dictators ; Great Britain had its traders and diplomats and America its technocrats. It was left to India to produce saints and sages from times immemorial."

Will Durant's definition of greatness excluded all who have not had an enduring influence upon mankind. According to him, the history of a nation is properly the history of its greatmen. " What are the rest of us but willing brick and mortar in their hands, that they may make a race a little finer than ourselves. India, as a nation was made a little finer by Vivekananda. ❑

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THE VEDANTIC HERITAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

PROF. S.P. DUBEY

Swami Vivekananda is one of those personalities who shake the world. He has influenced the human race of the present century in various profound ways. Our generation owes a lot to him. The first appearance of Swamiji on the global platform was in the Chicago Parliament of Religions held in September, 1893. It is befitting that our country as well as several others have planned to celebrate the Centenary of the event.

The heritage of Swami Vivekananda, the inspired son of our motherland, nay, of the mother earth, would include the entire history of mankind. And that would require more space and time for a person of any standard. Hence it would be more pragmatic to limit oneself to a particular aspect of the heritage of Narendra Nath Datta (later on famous as Vivekananda). And presently the Vedantic background of Swamiji, and that too very briefly, would be focussed on here.

As the very term 'vedanta' is connected with the Vedas, the Vedic literature necessarily forms an important aspect of the Vedantic heritage of Vivekananda. As we know, the four Vedas are the foundations of the Indian culture. The Rig. Veda is known as the earliest existing text of the human race. The Vedic seers speculated about the creation, the Creator, and the creatures. They tried to visualize the purpose of all these and thought of a way out of the cycles of birth, death and rebirth. The lawmakers established a society in this land of sacred mountains and rivers, based on *varnasrama-s*, [1] to be operated as per the ideals of the four ends *(prusartha-s)*. [2] The people were inclined to find out ultimate happiness in the realization of truth of this life, the absoluteness of the consciousness and the relativity of the physical appearances.

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1. Occupation (brahmana, ksatirya, vaisya,sudra) determined by one's propensities, and stage of life — (brahmacharya, garhasthya, vanaprastha, sannayasa — celibate student, married house-holder, retired contemplative, or monk, respectively.
2. Dharma (following the path of righteous living), Artha (moderate and reasonable pursuit of wealth); Kama (pursuit of legitimate pleasures and happiness); and Moksha (Spiritual liberation and attainment of life's greatest goal).

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The search for the Truth or Reality was the final step in the course of our march — *parama-purusartha*. The close affinity between the sacred and the secular is exhibited in the *Purusa-sukta (Rg. Veda X*, 90, 12) where the four organs of the Cosmic Person have been identified with the four categories of our society. Swami Vivekananda approves of the classification, subject to rectification of later defilements.

The Upanishadic seers had realized that the Absolute and the individual are one (*ayamatma Brahma — Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* II, 5, 19) since there is no Reality other than the Brahman *(Sarvam kahlu idam Brahma — Chhandogya Upanisad*, III, 14, 1). Swamiji clearly realized this and extended the idea to the identification of the poor with God *(daridra-narayana)*.

Consciousness, developed as self-awareness at the advanced human level, is regarded as the sure path to distinguish between the real and the unreal, lasting and transient (nitya-anitya vastu viveka, as Acharya Sankara would specify it). In the final analysis it is the consciousness, ever lasting and all-pervasive, and not the matter, that assumes the supreme position. Hence the phenomenal layers of the Real are not so important; they are the outer covers of the inner core — the conscient Being, as explained by the principle of five sheaths *(pancha-kosas — Taittiriya Upanishad*, III 2-6, & *Sarvopanisatsara*, 2.)

This conscient Being, through Its creative power, fashions the world and the individual. In this context It is known as God. God looks after His creation and also withdraws it as the spider withdraws its web. It is a beginningless process or sport (*lila* of the Supreme. It provides the individual an opportunity to understand the mystery surrounding him. The moment one becomes aware of the game (Maya), the veil is lifted and the person realizes freedom from bondage, even in his own lifetime (Jivanmukta).

The philosophy developed by Swami Vivekananda is known as practical Vedanta or Neo-vedantism. It is Monism, qualified in the sense that it retains the world as well as God. This is also the message of the Upanishads, and most clearly stated by the Isa Upanishad as follows :

Isavasyamidam sarvam yat kim ca jagatyam jagat,

tena tyaktena bhunjitha ma grdhah kasyasvid dhanam.

(Know that all this, whatever moves in the moving world, is enveloped by God. Therefore, find your enjoyment in renunciation; do not covet what belongs to others).

God, in essential form, is known as *Sat-cit-ananda*, where all the three constituents are equally and fully the *Brahman*. Here *ananda* (love, bliss) obliges God to extend his grace to all living beings. Swami Vivekananda, in such a context, develops the ideals of *samagra-mukti* (liberation for/of all) in tune with his practical Vedanta and universal religion.

The monistic philosophy of Vivekananda is not sheer continuation of the tradition. In fact he was a sceptic in his college days. Reportedly, he confided his scepticism to his friend, B.N. Seal (one of the most solid and

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erudite philosophers of our country), and sought guidance from him in search for truth. Seal, on his part, was a rationalist. His rationalism was amalgam of the monism of Sankara, the Hegelian dialectic, and the Gospel of the French Revolution. The revolutionary nationalism of Seal had great appeal to Narendra, although he did not confine himself to national limits. Within him the soul was in quest for the citizen of the world. Appreciating the condition of Narendra, this friend suggested to him to read Shelley. Shelley's pantheism and the spiritual principle of the unity made lasting impression on the young Narendranath.

If one is asked to identify one singular personality that shaped the mind of Vivekananda, the answer would be — Thakur. Thakur or Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was the most outstanding spiritual leader of the 19th century India. He was a simple soul with intense passion for God. At times he claimed himself to be the incarnation of God. He was initiated into Sannyasa by an advaitic monk, known as Totapuri who taught Gadadhar (Thakur) the techniques of *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

Sri Ramakrishna alone was able to answer affirmatively to Narendra when asked whether God could be shown. And before he expired (in 1986) he made Narendra realize God. The six years of discipleship under Thakur at Dakshineswar and Cossipore were very formative for the mind of Vivekananda.

The keynote of Vivekananda's Chicago Addresses was the unity of religious faiths on basic questions. And the first formula of the unitary principle, according to Thakur, was the service of man and God. He served Kali, the deity in the Dakshineswar temple and also served people to the extent of identifying himself with the chandalas (pariahs). He also practised beggary to get rid of egoism. Vivekananda imbibed humility at the instance of his Master.

Logical consistency was of utmost importance for Swami Vivekananda. He was happy with the Vedatic position wherein it is admitted that a statement made by a child if logically consistent must be accepted, rather than an inconsistent one made even by great men or even by Sukadeva himself. But he was also aware, although at a later stage, that one should know the limits of reason. He approves of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (II, 4, 1) position which talks of the Reality wherefrom our speech, along with the mind, returns being unable to grasp the Real. The *Katha Upanisad* (I, 11, 9) also confirms the same position when it says that 'This' cannot be obtained by reason : *naisa tarkena matirapaneya*. And Sankara also, while commenting on the *Brahma-sutras* (II, 1,11), has established that reason cannot be treated to be infallible. Vivekananda himself could develop complete faith in the Master only after the magical touch of Thakur at Dakshineswar.

The oher spiritual figure who influenced Swami Vivekananda was Pavahari Baba, a learned saint, widely travelled and well-versed in several languages. Narendranath visted this holy man of Ghazipur several times

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after the death of Sri Ramakrishna. And the Baba enlightened him on the divinity of nature. Narendranath found in the Baba a synthesis of the Vedanta and the social realization of the day.

Vivekananda travelled throughout the length and breadth of the country between 1891 and 1892 as a nameless ascetic in safron robe. It was during this journey that he consolidated his Sanskrit, Vedic studies and philosphy. His stay at Porbandar for about nine months was most fruitful. He was more inclined to the Vedantic tradition although he had sufficient awareness of other religio-philosophical schools of the country, namely, Jainism, Buddhism, Charvaka, etc. He treated Buddhism as the fulfilment of Hinduism. He maintained that the *dhamma* professed by Sakyamuni was subsequently degraded till Acharya Sankara showed that the essence of Buddhism and Vedanta are not different. He also held that the Samkhya theory of evolution, coupled with ontology of the Advaita Vedanta, makes for a satisfactory understanding of the cosmos. He, further, had profound knowledge of the Western schools of philosophy. He had read the history of Western thought with serious mind. He was greatly influenced by David Hume's scepticism when he was in college. The logical accuracy and the rational analysis of Western thought had lasting impact on him. But he was more infleunced by the philosophy of Advaita, beginning with the Upanishads and culminating in Sankara's interpretation. He was at home with the Sanskirt texts. He was greatly inspired by the *Katha Upanishad* when it enjoins to 'Arise, awake, having attained the boons, understand them — *Uttisthata jagrata pripya varan nibodhata* (I, 3, 19).

The aphorisms of Badarayana present to Vivekananda the basic texts of the Vedanta philosophy interpreted variously by the Acharyas. He had very clearly understood the philosophies of Sankara and Ramanuja, based on the Brahma-sutras. The combination of the two major currents, namely, Advaitism and Qualified Monism, finds expression in the Neo-vedantism, as said earlier, in the Neo-vedanta of Vivekananda, the reality of the world has been retained along with the metaphysical Absolute of Sankara. For him these two realms are not different; they are the two dimensions of one and the same Reality, namely, Brahman. The concept of essential unity of every thing owes its origin to the Advaita philosphy. The distinction between the empirical standpoint and the transcendental point of view is deeply influenced by the vyavaharika and the paramarthika categories of the Advaita system. The creation of the world, although due to Maya, is not illusory. The world is an important step leading to the ultimate goal. Ramanuja's concept of *bhakti* or devotion has also influenced Vivekananda. He finds *para-bhakti* as the means to salvation. In his own life he used to sing devotional songs on various occasions.

Vivekananda was the greatest exponent of the Advaitic monism to the West. He was convinced that only Advaita Vedanta could be the future faith of the enlightened humanity. Vedanta, for him, was not only spiritual, but also rational and in harmony with

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the scientific outlook. The latest discoveries of science to him seemed like echoes of the spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosphy.

The Advaita Philosophy can be universally practised because it treats human beings to be spiritual. The finite and the infinite are not only not different paths which men take through various tendencies, all lead to the same goal, as different streams having the sources in different places, lead to the ocean. Lord Krsna says the same in the Gita : " Whosoever comes to me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me."

The exposition of Vedanta by Vivekananda is called practical, or neo-Vedanta, as said earlier. It could be briefly stated as advocating i) identity of Brahman with His power — Maya, (ii) oneness of the formless and personal God, and (iii) all-pervasiveness of God. He maintained that ultimate unity is reached through duality and multiplicity. They are not negated. But physical individuality is not the final position. Science has already shown that physical individuality is one little continuously changing body in an unbroken ocean of matter, and Advaita (unity) is the necessary conclusion with our other counterpart — Soul.

Vivekananda had the capacity to discriminate between the real and the unreal, lasting and the changing, the truth and the falsity *(viveka)*. He could also remain in blissful mood in adverse circumstances which were in abundance around him.

The brief account of the Vedantic heritage of Swamiji would enable us to understand his entire thought in a more meaningful manner. The great mind of Vivekananda has enlightened humanity in many dimensions. It should be our endeavour to understand him properly and interpret him to the coming generation in unmistaken and practical terms. ⊓

(Contd from page 38)

He is a devout pupil and a kindred teacher too. He hails, in Sanskrit, his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna as an Avatar of Sri Krishna, the preceptor of the Gita. He blesses Sister Nivedita, his disciple, to be the mistress, servant and friend, all in one, to India's future son. He addresses another western lady-disciple from New York, as an 'Early Violet' and exhorts her in poetry, not to get disheartened at her unbecoming situation and give up her bloom and blossom. "Change not thy nature ... ever pour thy sweet perfume, unasked, unstinted, sure!" that is the Upadesh of this great master.

(Reprinted from Triveni, January, 1964)

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EDUCATION OF THE MASSES

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

My heart aches to think of the condition of the poor, the low in India. They sink lower and lower every day. They feel the blows showered upon them by a cruel society, but they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men. My heart is too full to express my feelings. So long as the millions live in hunger and ingnorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them. Let these people be your God, think for them, work for them, pray for them incessantly, the Lord will show you the way. Our great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is the cause of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed and well cared for.

A nation is advanced, in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it by spreading education among the masses. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, to develop their lost individuality. They are to be given ideas. Their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, evry man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas-that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallisation comes in the law of nature.

My idea is first of all to bring out the gems of spirituality stored up in our books and in the possession of a few only, hidden as it were in monasteries and forests-to bring them out; to bring the knolwedge out of them, not only from the hands where it is hidden, but from the still more inaccesssible chest, the language in which it is prevented, the incrustation of centuries of Sanskrit words. In one word, I want to make them popular. I want to bring out the ideas and let them be it common property of all, of every man in India, whether he knows the Sanskrit language or not. The great difficulty in the way is the Sanskrit language, this glorious language of ours; and this difficulty cannot be

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removed until, if it is possible, the whole of our nation are good Sanskrit scholars. You will understand the difficulty when I tell you that I have been studying this language all my life, and yet every new book is new to me. How much more difficult would it then be for people who never had time to study it thoroughly ! Therefore, the ideas must be taught in the language of the people. Teach the masses in the vernaculars. Give them ideas; they will get information, but something more will be necessary. Give them culture. Until you can give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses.

At the same time, Sanskrit education must go along with it; because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige, a power and a strength to the race. Even the great Buddha made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the masses. He wanted rapid and immediate results, and translated and preached in the language of the day-Pali. That was grand; he spoke the language of the people and the poeple understood him. It spread the ideas quickly, and made them reach far and wide. But along with that, Sanskrit ought to have been spread. Knowledge came, but prestige was not there. Until you give them that, there will be another caste created, having the advantage of the Sanskrit language, which quickly gets above the rest.

Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting about idly won't do any more. Make them understand their real condition and say, "O ye Brothers, all arise! awake, tell them how to improve their condition, and make them comprehend the sublime truths of the Shastras, by presenting them in a lucid and popular way. Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the brahmanas. Initiate them, even down to the lowliest, in the so fiery mantras. Also instruct them, in simple words, about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc.

Centuries and centuries, a thousand years of crushing tyranny of castes, kings and foreigners, have taken out all their strength. And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and to believe. "I am the soul." "Me the sword cannot cut, no weapons pierce; me the fire cannot burn; me the air cannot dry; I am the Omnipotent, I am the Omniscient." These conceptions of the Vedanta must come out from the forest and the cave; they must come out to work at the bar and the bench, in the pulpit and in the cottage of the poor man, with the fishermen that are catching fish, and with the students that are studying. They call to every man, woman and child, whatever their occupation, wherever they may be. How can the fisherman and all these carry out the ideas of the Upanishads? The way has been shown. If the fisherman thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better fisherman; if a student thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better student.

The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. Suppose you open a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty in India is

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such that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields, or otherwise try to make a living, than come to the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet, must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him. There are thousands of single-minded self-sacrificing sannyasins in our own country, going from village to village, teaching religion. If some of them can be organised as teachers of secular things also they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching, but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the same evening, with a camera, a globe, some maps, etc., they can teach a great deal of Astronomy and Geography to give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in life-time through books.

Engrossed in the struggle for existence, they had not the opportunity for the awakening of knowledge. They have worked so long like machines, and the clever educated section have taken the substantial part of the fruits of their labour. But times have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact, and making a united front against this. The upper classes will no longer be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights.

Therefore I say, set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, " You are our brothers-part and parcel of our bodies. " If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold. Kindle their knowledge with the help of modern science. Buy some magic lanterns, maps, globes, and some chemicals. Teach them History, Geography, Science, Literature, and along with these the profound truths of religion through these.

Three things are necessary for great achievements. First to feel from the heart. What is in the intellect or reason? It goes a few steps and there it stops. But through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates. Feel, therefore, my would be patriots. Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and the sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your blood, coursing through your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the very first step.

You may feel, then, but instead of spending your energies in frothy talk, have you found any way out, for all their miseries, to bring them out of this living death? Yet, that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions? If the whole world stands against you, sword in hand would you still dare to do that if all your money goes, your name dies,

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your wealth vanishes, would you still stick to it? Would you still pursue it and go on steadily to your own goal? As the great king Bhartri Hari says, "Let the sages blame or let them praise; let the Goddess of Fortune come or let her go wherever She likes; let death come today or let it come after a hundred years, he indeed is the steady man who does not move one inch from the way of truth". Have you got that steadfastness? If you have these three things, each one of you will work miracles.

Let us pray, " Lead, kindly Light" - A beam will come through the dark, and a hand will be stretched forth to lead us. Let each one of us pray day and night for the down-trodden millions of India, who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft and tyranny-pray, day and night for them. I care more to preach to them than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor. Who feels for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Him I call a Mahatma who feels for the poor. Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them? Who will travel from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God, think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly. The Lord will show you the way. ❑

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CHICAGO ADDRESS

By Dr. D. ANJANEYULU

IN THE RENAISSANCE of modern India, Swami Vivekananda remains one of the most dynamic and fascinating figures. To my mind, this process of Renaissance starts, in a different sphere, with Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who can be described as the first of the really modern men in this country. Though he lived some two hundred years ago, he still strikes me as being more modern and liberal than many of the social and political leaders, who manage to dominate our lives today.

Vivekananda has been a celebrity in this country and elsewhere too, in the world outside. But there is no need for us to romanticise the starting point of his Western odyssey. If we care to check the facts correctly, we would realise that no eager crowds were there to surround him on disembarking at the port. Nor was a red-carpet welcome awaiting him at the venue i.e., in the great Hall of Columbus Art Institute, Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

When the Swami arrived in the U.S., he was an obscure person, barely thirty years old. He was almost an obscure person in his own country as well. He had even difficulty in getting admission to the Parliament as a delegate, for want of the specified credentials. Luckily for him, and the future of humanity, India in particular, these credentials were provided by Prof. J.H. Wright of Harvard University. He met Swamiji at a private dinner and was so impressed by his scholarship that he wrote to a number of important people connected with the Parliament of Religions. In introducing him, he wrote : " Here is a man who is more learned than all our learned professors put together. "

When the young and handsome monk finally appeared at the podium on 11 Septemeber 1893, he attracted the widest attention by the strangeness of his cloak - like attire, more so by his magnetic eyes. Added to all this was the mode of his address, which was unconventional, but heart-warming. He said :

" Sisters and Brothers of America, ... I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance;

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we believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. "

" I am proud to belong to a nation, which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is sheltering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation.

" I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is everyday repeated by millions of human beings : ' As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee. " (' Nadeenaam Sagaram Gachhati ')

Commending the main objective of the convention, the Swami looked upon it as a vindication in itself, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita : " Whoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me.

He then deplored the tragic fact that sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They had filled it with violence, bloodshed and despair. He fervently hoped that " the bell that tolled this morning in honour of this convention maybe the death - knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal. "

In his address on 15 September 1893, the Swami referred to the so-called differences between the various faiths, often exaggerated, comparing the narrow perceptions to the world-views of the frogs in the well. Putting it in his own characteristically picturesque way, he observed :

" I am a Hindu. I am sitting in my own little well and thinking that the whole world is my little well. The Christain sits in his little well and thinks the whole world is his well. The Mohammedan sits in his little well and thinks that is the whole world. I have to thank you of America for the great attempt you are making to break down the barriers of this little world of ours, and hope that, in the future, the Lord will help you to accomplish your purpose. "

As the convention lasted for 17 days (11 to 27 September 1893), Swami Vivekananda had to wait for more than a week to present his paper on " Hinduism " (on 19 September). Dr. Noble, who presided over the session, presented the Hindu monk, who wore an orange robe bound with a scarlet sash, and a pale yellow turban, with a customary smile on his face. He

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was applauded loudly by a huge crowded audience, in which women vastly outnumbered the men.

To the concerted attack on " Hinduism " by the Christian delegates earlier, the Swami made a telling reply, citing chapter and verse from the history of the world. He said : " We look back into history and see that the prosperity of Christian Europe began with Spain. Spain's prosperity began with the invasion of Mexico. Christianity wins its prosperity by cutting the throat of its fellowmen. At such a price, the Hindu will not have prosperity. I have sat here and heard the height of intolerance. I heard the creeds of Moslems applauded, when the Moslem sword is carrying destruction into India. Blood and sword are not for the Hindu, whose religion is based on the laws of love. "

Apart from rebuttals and repartees, the long document presented a masterly summary of the philosophy, psychlogy, and general ideas and statements on Hinduism in its all inclusive aspects. It was probably the first authentic and authoritative exposition of the essence of Hinduism for the benefit of the Western world.

At the final session of the Parliament (On 27 September 1893) the Swamiji made a grand appeal for the harmony of religious faiths. He said :

" Much has been said of the common ground of religious unity. I am not going just now to venture my own theory. But if anyone here hopes that this unity will come by the triumph of anyone of the religions and the destruction of the others, to him I say : " Brother, yours is an impossible hope. " Do I wish that the Christian would become Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid. "

It was a case for harmony and peaceful co-existence of religions convincingly argued. Was there anything else that could be learnt from the Parliament of Religions?

Swami Vivekananda was clear in his own mind about the wholesome lesson of humility that should not be lost on anyone. To quote his own words :

" It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character.

" In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance : " Help and not Fight ", "Assimilation and not Destruction, " "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension. "

How we wish that Swami Vivekananda's robust optimism were fully justified by subsequent developments in the different religions! Unfortunately for us, we now live in an age in which it has become a fashion for everyone to call everyone else a " fundamentalist ", which is but a euphemism for

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"fanaticism ". It doesn't matter what is written on the banner of every religion, if they do have a banner. But in the minds of many are planted the seeds of hatred and intolerance, which are growing into plants and trees in an atmosphere of suspicion and tension.

But, it would do everyone a lot of good to pay attention to Swami Vivekananda's words of lasting wisdom. (Viveka itself literally means " Wisdom, with discrimination.") He went West to spread the message of Truth, according to Vedanta, which underlines the potential divnity of man. More so to seek the help of the advanced countries of the West for the material progress of the Indian masses, who didn't need a new religion. He found himself famous, overnight, but he was not happy. He was worried, all the while, about the lot of India's lowly and lost. He lit the flame of social awareness, economic development and spiritual self-confidence. For others to make it burn brighter and brighter.

❑

THE CUP

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

This is your cup-the cup assigned to you from the beginning
Nay, My child, I know how much of that dark drink is your own brew

Of fault and passion, ages long ago,
In the deep years of yesterday, I know

This is your road—a painful road and drear,
I made the stones that never give you rest.
I set your friend in pleasant ways and clear,
And he shall come like you, unto My breast.

But you, My child, must travel here.
This is your task. It has no joy nor grace,
But it is not meant for any other hand,
And in My universe hath measured place,
Take it. I do not bid you understand.
I bid you close your eyes to see My face.

THE SONG OF THE FREE

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

And mind its mantle, dreamy net,
Casts o'er them all and holds them fast.
In warp and woof of thought are set
Earth, hells and heavens, or worst or best.

Know these are but the outer crust —
All space and time, all effect, cause,
I am beyond all sense, all thought,
The Witness of Universe!

Not two nor many, its but One,
And thus in me all me's I have,
I cannot hate, I cannot shun
Myself from me—I can but love!

From dreams awake, from bonds be free!
Be not afraid. This mystery,
My shadow, cannot frighten me!
Know once for all that I am He!

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

MAMIDIPUDI PATTABHIRAM

KASHMIR AND ELECTIONS to the State Assemblies of Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram have dominated the political scene in the country in the quarter under review. It was indeed a very difficult situation that had arisen in Kashmir with large numbers of militants and some civilians holed up in the famous Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar. The militants refused to come out and there was a crisis for more than a month before it was resolved without violence and much loss of face for the administration. A crisis of the kind that had arisen did require great patience and tact for resolving it and it must be said to the credit of the Government that it exhibited both the requirements in an abundant measure. It was a big dilemma for the Government since any hasty action would have damaged the shrine and created havoc. The security forces laid seige and ensured that no one really escaped. The idea was to starve the persons inside so that some day they would all come out on their own. After the Blue Star Operation in Amritsar when the Golden Temple was damaged due to the entry of the Army to arrest the extremists who had taken refuge inside and the subsequent rise of militancy in Punjab by the Sikhs as a retaliatory measure, the Government thought that a similar Army action might become counter productive in Kashmir.

Already international pressure was being brought on India to come to terms with Pakistan ignoring the Shimla Agreement which laid down that any dispute should be settled bilaterally. The Government was, therefore, cautious and there could be no valid criticism of the decision to cut off electricity and water supplies in an effort to tire the militants out and break their will. Whether this was enough for the purpose on hand is a debatable point but what one could say with authority is that the policy of wait and see had paid off at least in this case. Yet fanaticism and the urge for martyrdom are powerful emotions with which the world has not dealt with conspicuous success so far. The Government is busy with the elections in the Hindi heartland and, therefore, it had become somewhat difficult to give undivided attention to Kashmir but all the same the matter was dealt with great dexterity and seriousness.

The militants who included some Pakistani nationals were not willing to

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come out unless they were set free without preconditions. This was indeed an impossible demand and no Government which is responsible to the people will be prepared to accept such terms. The militants were also in possession of arms and ammunition and any hasty action by the Government as already quoted might even lead to destruction of the shrine besides causing danger to the lives of innocent persons held hostage by them. Of course, the seige was somewhat diluted with the directions of the High Court and the Supreme Court to permit water, food and medical assistance to enter the precincts of the shrine. However after a great deal of negotiations in which some militant organisations of the State too took part, the militants finally came out unconditionally. There has been some screening later and the civilians were let out while the militants are still being questioned. There was a sigh of relief all over the country that the episode did not lead to a conflagration. Hindu Muslim relations did not get worse as was expected and there have been no communal incidents in the country. The credit for this must go to the Prime Minister who obviously gave a free hand to the Governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao who was not prepared for any compromise on the matter.

Perhaps the administration would have opted for direct action if the militants did not yield but this is now in the realm of speculation. Those who were hoping that India would be put in a tight corner must have felt disappointed. It is in this context the bigger question is raised whether the Army should have been used for this operation as had been done. It has been said that a Government seeks the Army's assitance only when it is beyond the capabilities of the civil authorities to cope with national calamities or civil unrest. When the Army is called in it should be given a clear charter of what to do, not *how* to do it. That, as a former Army General had put it, would be back seat driving and the shortest route to disaster. Kashmir is under President's rule and the administration comes under the Governor. When the rot set in at Hazratbal the civil authorities sought the help of the Army in evicting the armed militants from the shrine. But then the Army was not used for the purpose and they were just waiting for orders. What then was the Army's precise role in Hazratbal? As events finally tuned out the Army was only a standby without any definitive function. Therefore a point of view is put forth that the Army did not have a role to play and the armed police or the paramilitary forces should have sufficed. While it could be said that it is construed by some as a gross misuse of the Army the fact is that the Government did not want to take chances. The situation had become extremely complex and the Government must have thought that even the National Security Guards, a force specially created and trained for such purposes would not be adequate.

Now that the sordid chapter is over the Government must think of measures to restore popular rule in the State. This is not going to be easy either.

There are no recognisable political parties in Jammu and Kashmir and, therefore, the question is how to revive the political process. The Centre should better bury hopes of instant

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breakthroughs and concentrate on improving the functioning of the security forces, restoring the rule of law and making a sustained effort to woo the Kashmiris with a generous dose of autonomy that would make the trauma of separating from India unnecessary. Not that efforts to begin the political process should be kept in abeyance. Of course, there is no question of India starting any negotiation with Pakistan on Kashmir since that would be a significant propaganda victory for the latter and is bound to be used for demanding unacceptable compromises. It is unfortunate that militant groups have graduated from amateur hit and run bands to well organised daring guerrilla groups bristling with arms and uptodate knowledge of explosives. The complicity of Pakistan is very clear and Pakistani training and the induction of veteran mercenaries in the State have also transformed the character of the insurgency. There are vast tracks in the State in the rural areas with a thriving prallel administration and armed bands have been spilled into the Jammu region also. All in all a very depressing picture which will have to be handled with great care and caution. How exactly the Government is going to tackle the problem is not clear and there is still no evidence of a Kashmir policy. Ministers visiting Kashmir for a few hours under heavy security is not going to make much impact. A mass contact programme will have to be initiated and more locals should get into key positions in the State administration which alone gives a sense of participation.

By the time this number of Triveni is out the election results in the five States going to the polls would have been known. The more important aspect is that the democratic exercise has gone on without any serious hinge or problem. Comparatively speaking there has much less violence than was expected and electroal malpractices too have been far fewer than on the previous occasions. There has also been a big participation in voting which shows that the electorate has been very alert. The Chief Election Commissioner has taken the necessary precautions to ensure a free and fair poll although he was himself embroiled in an unseemly controversy over the appointment of two more Election Commissioners. Mr. T.N. Seshan did not take kindly to the installation of the new incumbents mainly because he knew they were there to clip his wings. A presidential ordinance appointing the Commissioners stipulated that all decisions of the Commission should be unanimous as far as possible but in case of differences the majority view will prevaild. Which in effect means that the two Commissioners could upset if they want, all the decisions of the Chief Election Commissioner. Mr. Seshan knew this would hamper his style of functioning and he will not have the same authority to conduct the election proceedings as he was having earlier. After what the Commissioners did in the first few days which was not to his liking he challenged the very Ordinance and its provisons in the Supreme Court.

In the meantime, the Commissioners were contending that they had an equal status as that of the Chief Election Commissioner who was only first among them. A plain reading of the Constitution, however, would have revealed that the Chief Commissioner

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is the chairman when more Commissioners are apponted. It is also provided that they could be removed on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner and this provison could by no stretch of imagination be altered by a mere Ordinance. However, the Supreme Court directed that it was the Chief Election Commissioner's view that whould prevail and there was no question of taking decisions by majority. Thus Mr. Seshan's stand was vindicated although the Court's verdict did upset the two Commissioners who have now second thoughts on their continuance in office. The Court, however, is expected to give its final ruling later but there is little doubt that the primacy of the Chief Election Commissioner would not be jeopardised. That is as it should be. Although Mr. Seshan was acting on occasions in an arbitrary manner he had done a great deal to maintain the independence of the Commission and this is a significant gain to the democratic polity.

For instance, it was his indictment of the Governor of Himachal Pradesh who was actually camping in Madhya Pradesh to canvas for his son who was a Congress (I) candidate for the State Assembly that led to his (Governor's) resignation. A constitutional functionary like a Governor cannot act like a politician and he must keep himself above purely partisan politics. And his failure to do so has cost him his job although it should be said to his credit that he vacated his office the moment the mistake was pointed out. The results of the elections will be eagerly awaited as the entire Hindi heartland is involved in the process. If the Congress (I) which is the ruling party at the Centre fails to make the grade especially in Uttar Pradesh, its prestige will come down and the people will attribute this to its failure to protect the Babri Masjid. If the BJP wins in atleast three States, there will be a clamour for a midterm Lok Sabha poll although the chances of the demand being conceded are remote.

Yet another development worth noting is the Supreme Court verdict clearing the Maharashtra Chief Minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar, of the charge of corrupt practices during the 1991 Lok Sabha elections and thus it removed the political shadow cast on him by an earlier order of the Bombay High Court. The Aurangabad bench of the High Court held him guilty of character assassination while campaigning for the Congress (I) candidate, Mr. Gadakh. The High Court set aside the election of Mr. Gadakh for that reason and even declared the rival candidate, Mr. Vikhe Patil, elected instead. This was, of course, an extraordinary decision which was reversed by the Supreme Court. The charge against Mr. Pawar was that he said at public meetings that the rival candidate was influencing voters by offering money. The Supreme Court however did not accept the argument and sid that Mr. Pawar's observations did not really mean to say that the candidate was offering monetary inducements to the voters. The more important aspect of the issue is that Mr. Pawar had just assumed the post of Chief Minister of Maharashtra after giving up the post of Union Defence Minister at the request of the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao. The charges of corruption against Mr. Pawar related to somebody's election and not his own. And if only the Supreme Court had upheld the High Court order it would have meant certain curtailment of Mr. Pawar's political career. Mr. Pawar is

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even now hoping to return to national politics and if he entails electoral disqualification at this crucial time he is bound to go into the oblivion. Mr. Pawar is saved of this ignominy and how exactly he will shape himself in the future is a matter which will be watched with great interest by the discerning observers all over the country.

In spite of the fact that the BJP is making some headway the preponderance of the Congress party is still not in doubt. For historical reasons among which the most important is the part played by the party in the freedom movement the Congress has been strong. Of course, a different voting system as for instance proportional representation might have very much reduced the strength of the Congress in Parliament and in the Assemblies. But given the nearly illiterate electorate which cannot follow its intricate workings there is no immediate chance of the first-past-the-post system now existing being changed. The Congress party has seats disproportionate to its voting strength and this imbalance can be set right gradually as other political parties grow. Up to a point this has already been corrected because of the emergence of strong Opposition parties. And yet the lack of a single unified opposition party is working in favour of the Congress (I). There is no gainsaying that the need of the hour is a strong and stable government at the Centre and in the States whatever party is in power. Although many have said about the socalled decline of Parliament, the presence of influential political parties with strength has resulted in increasing sensitivity to the moods and pulse of the pople in the House and this is a good sign. One hopes that in the present elections which is a mini-general election considering the very large number of voters involved some party or the other will obtain a majority and thus prevent uncertainity in the conduct of the Government. A hung Assembly will lead the State to nowhere and the country can illafford unstable governments any more. The costs of democracy are indeed high.

A SONG ON SAMADHI

Swami Vivekananda

Lo! The sun is not, nor he comely moon,
All light extinct; in the great void of space
Floats shadow like the image-universe.

In the void of mind involute, there floats
The fleeting universe, rises and floats,
Sinks again, ceaseless, in the current " I ".

Slowly, slowly, the shadow-multitude
Entered the primal womb, and flowed ceaseless,
The only current, " I am ", " I am ".

Lo! ' Tis stopped, ev'n that current flows no more,
Void merged into void—beyond speech and mind!
Whose heart understands, he verily does.

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ANNIE BESANT - A RADIANT MESSENGER

RADHA BURNIER

Annie Besant's presence in India was like that of a glorious rainbow, bridging East and West, spirituality and practical endeavour, intellect and compassion. Unfortunately sixty years after her departure to higher worlds and a century after her arrival in India. She is remembered, if at all, only for her political work to liberate India from colonial rule and not for her larger work to regenerate India.

Annie Besant did not care for political action for its own sake. The political freedom of India was for her just a step to awaken the Indian people to the immense value of their moral and spiritual heritage. To accomplish this, she laboured tirelessly in multifarious directions, making a powerful impact on the life of the nation - its religions, education, social life, the treatment of women, children, the underprivileged and many other things besides. This made Gandhiji to remark : "It is Dr. Besant who has awakened India from her deep slumber and I pray that she may live long to witness a free India " (*New India*, 2 Oct. 1928).

Dr. Besant was no stranger to India when she set her foot on this soil for the first time on 16 November 1893 at Tuticorin. She had worked with Charles Bradlaugh, the great English radical reformer, for the upliftment of the poor, and the right to liberty of all peoples, poor or rich, coloured or white. Annie Besant's passion was the service of the world, particularly of the oppressed and helpless, for her nature overflowed with love. She had achieved renown for championing the cause of labour, of free meals to poor childern (She was on the London School Board), the right of women to higher education, the humane treatment of criminals and numerous other causes. She was fearless, energetic, a great organizer, yet tender, generous and loving in surprassing measure.

All over England, she had awakened the conscience of the great audiences she addressed, with the tremendous eloquence and power which were at her disposal, about Ireland, India and other colonized nations. Her pamphlet *England, India and Afghanistan* had been widely circulated.

Though she was born in England, Annie Besant's soul was Indian. She took naturally to the Indian way of life, sitting cross-legged, wearing a

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sari, adopting a simple ascetic life, and feeling one with the Indian poeple. But she was no narrow nationalist, but a large-hearted world citizen, concerned with both the material and spiritual welfare of all people, towards which she believed India could contribute a wealth of wisdom.

After Annie Besant settled down in Varanasi in 1895 she spent several years studying Indian lore to understand the philosophy and culture of the land. She learnt Sanskrit, and translated the *Bhagavad Gita*. She associated with learned men, and studied the principal teachings of all the great religions of India. She acquainted herself with Indian customs and conditions, and the problems of the rural as well as educated people. She prepared herself for the later dynamic activity.

What kind of India had she in her mind? " The India I love and revere and would fain see living among the nations, is not an India Westernized, rent with the struggles of political parties, heated with the fire of political passions, with a people ignorant and degraded, while those who might have raised them are fighting for the loaves and fishes of political triumph. The India to which I belong in faith and heart is a civilization in which spiritual knowledge was accounted highest title to honour and in which the people reverenced and sought after spiritual truths. To help in turning India into another Great Britain or another Germany is an ambition that does not allure me. Therefore the India that I would give my life to help in building is an India learned in the ancient philosophy, pulsing with an ancient religion, an India to which all other lands should look for spiritual life - where the life of all should be materially simple but intellectually noble and spiritually sublime. "

So, even while she studied and learnt, she gave eloquent lectures all over India on the deep truths of the great religions. She stressed the need to be religious without being sectarian, devoted without being fanatical, to love one's own faith without decrying or hating the faiths of others. " Make religion a unifying force, not a separative ", She taught. " I make no apology here for the variety of religious beliefs, for I assert that in that variety lives their greatest value to men. Men are of different temperaments, of different types, they are put together in different ways. Would you have religion one in its forms as well as one in its essence ? Then tell the sun to send out but a single ray of colour ; and make all the varied world one colour, because you only have one hue out of the white. "

Soon, Annie Besant realized that the youth of the nation was sadly ignorant of their own culture and faith. Education under British rule deprived them of self-respect. Hence, she founded the famous Central Hindu School and College (1898-99) in Benares. She kept these institutions free of control by the British rulers which meant shouldering enormous financial responsibility. The institutions grew into celebrity as they built the spirit of patriotism and unselfish devotion in young hearts without bigotry and narrow-mindedness. Several princes came forward with support and eager young men threw up their jobs to teach. She herself inspired the students by talks about their duties, the

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teachings in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, about citizenship, and many other essential subjects. " Remember the old model of the Aryans ", She said, " the same as the model of western chivalry ; strong and gentle, knightly and courteous." That was the motto held to her students. She was completely against cramming.

" Sharpening the memory at the expense of the mind ". Education had to endow the boys and girls with the powers of observing, reasoning, and drawing sound conclusions.

The Central Hindu College and Schools were situated in fine buildings on beautiful land. But in a characteristic gesture of generosity, she gave it all away to provide the nucleus of the Benares Hindu University. Then her phenomenal energy was directed to creating a series of national schools all over India with lofty ideals. " Our work is the training of thousands of India's sons into noble manhood, into worthiness to become free citizens in a free land. some of you imagine, unthinking - for the young are hasty and do not always stop to think - that freedom is to be won by loud talking, by violent speeches, by noisy demonstrations, by tumultous processions through the streets. I tell you that Liberty is too lofty and too divine a goddess to descend into a country until purity of heart, noble living, self-sacrifice, discipline and self-control have made of the citizens a throne on which she may sit and reign."

So successfully were the young boys and girls in her institutions trained into a sense of responsibility and of public duty that even in stressful circumstances there never was any indiscipline or trouble in any of them.

Girls were prepared for citizenship as much as boys. The Central Hindu Girls School at Varanasi had been founded in 1904, a time when parents had to be induced to send their daughters to school. But the pioneers were not daunted and many national girls schools sprang up later. Annie Besant stated : " Few realize the immense strength latent in Indian womanhood...India's uplift will come speedily when her daughters put to it their delicate but strong hands. It was under her inspiration that her Theosophist helpers like Margaret Cousins started the Women 's Indian Association and other bodies to bring women into the mainstream.

As the educational work progressed, she campaigned to reform the social structure. She spoke against superstitious beliefs and undesirable customs. With the help of a number of stalwarts, parents pledged themselves not to give their daughters in marriage until they were mature. The humane treatment of widows, prevention of cruelty to animals - there was hardly a false belief which she did not attack as she tried to breathe new life into the Indian consciousness.

Since 1894, much before Dr. Besant prepared for political action, she preached and practised Swadeshi. Everything she used - her furniture, clothes, etc - was Swadeshi. In 1916, she started the Home Rule movement with branches of the Home Rule League in every town. Home Rule became " a Mantram in every household ". When others were hesitant, she demanded that nothing less than complete self-rule would do for India. It was because of Annie Besant that there was an " Indian lobby " in the

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British Parliament. Her daily news paper *New India* was a vibrant voice claiming India 's freedom in no uncertain terms. Though she stressed the need for constitutional struggle, she was " externed " by the Government of Bombay and the Central provinces in 1916 and " interned " by the Government of Madras in 1971. But Public enthusiasm in her favour was strong and she was soon released. With great jubiliation she was elected as the first woman President of the Indian National Congress in 1917.

Her popularity vanished when she refused to go along with Civil Disobedience when Gandhiji started it. She said : " Defiance of law for the mere sake of defiance encourages a spirit of lawlessness among the ignorant and the criminal classes, which strikes at the very foundations of society. If the present Government permitted this to continue unchecked, they would bequeath to their Indian successors the painful task of reducing to order the chaos they had permitted, instead of handing over to them a well-ordered and law-abiding people. "

Ironically, after independence, the Indian Government has given a mafia role to the " ignorant and criminal classes ". How far-sighted she was ! By teaching the masses to break the law, we have indeed built into a public consciousness a deplorable disregard for order, and day by day the country slides into a state of anarchy.

In 1907 Dr. Besant has succeeded Col. H.S. Olcott as President of the Theosophical Society, whose main object is to build the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinctions of race, creed, sex, caste, colour and so forth. Till her death in 1933 she held this office as the members wanted none other. Thousands all over the world looked up to her as their spiritual teacher. She always urged them to love. " Do nothing to increase the spirit of hate, even towards those who are ' enemies ' in the physical world today..You cannot go wrong in love ; you are sure to go wrong in hate ; hate dulls the intellect and hardens the heart." She also gave valuable instructions on self-development, meditation, and spiritual living.

In a short space it is impossible to give an account of all she did - of how she founded scouting in India when Baden Powell declared Indian boys unfit for it ; how she trained the young in Youth Parliaments and Young Men's Indian Associations ; the books she wrote ; the new character she gave to the Indian National Congress ; and so on and so forth. In one life, she is said to have lived several lives. What was the keynote of all her accomplishments ? Biographers so far have shown no understanding of what moved her to great deeds ; they have not seen that the one thing that mattered in her life was the service of others (*loka-sangraha*). Sacrifice is a joy and not a sorrow, she declared. Late though it is, if even now Indians will listen to her message, there is hope for India of a bright future. ❑

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ARTHUR MILLER'S DEATH OF A SALESMAN REVISITED

D. VENKATESWARULU

In all my plays and books I try to take settings and dramatic situations from life which involve real questions of right and wrong ..... I don't see how you can write anything decent without using the question of right and wrong as the basis. (Robert A. Martin, The Theatre Essays of Arthur Miller).

Why did Willy Loman commit suicide and what are his life's lessons to America that has gone on and flourished/stumbled over for more than four decades after the appearance of Miller's play? It is a common place observation to say that Willy is caught up in a situation from which he has not found a way out. Times, indeed seem to have changed, as Bob Dylan would have it, and Willy finds himself an outsider, not to be accomodated, not to be acculturated and, sadly, not even to be recognized. In other words, he is taken by surprise and deep terror. It was Walter Benjamin who famously noted that there " is no document of civilization which is not also at the same time a document of barbarism " (" Theses on the Philosophy of History ", 257). Willy, undoubtedly, is a victim of the barbaric social malady that has little sympathy for a common man.

After more than four decades, what has happened to Willy still haunts us. His peculiar condition in a society, ruthlessly managed by a corporate structure, needs to be systematized, humanely re-situated and adequately explained. His life needs an explanation, recognition and honour. to reduce Willy's life to a study of psychology, maladjustment, guilt and a desperate need for stability is certainly justified but it's message goes beyond that, and into the territory of a collective morality. The play is a willed creation of a writer (Arthur Miller) whose attempts at journeying through the American heart of darkness need little introduction. His plays generally reflect the crisis of liberal America with its degenerated and degenerating institutional set-up. His critique of America should not be confused with the thirties-style-left-wingism because by straitjacketing in this fashion one tends to ignore the issues and the framework of these issues. *Death of a Salesman* is a case in point.

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In the " Requiem " section of the play, Linda, Willy's wife, is baffled and pained at her husband's death and struggles unsuccessfully to bring herself to cry. She confesses : " Forgive me, dear. I can't cry. I don't know what it is, but I can't cry ..... It seems to me that you're just on another trip. I keep expecting you ..... I search and search and search, and I can't understand it, Willy. I made the last payment on the house today ..... And there'll be nobody home ..... We're free and clear " (*Death of a Salesman, Collected Plays, Vol. 1*, 222). It appears that Willy is an enigma even to his immediate family as he is to the unsettling American psyche. Linda recognizes his deep quandaries but she does not know how to rationalize his death. His son, Biff, judges him harshly by saying that he has wrong dreams all along " phony " dreams ! But none of them ever indicts the system which speaks for their own immature understanding or victims of reification? of a social fabric to which Willy attempts a timid answer, not unfortunately to break from it which must have been a heresy to him, but to get accomodated to it vicariously through the possible success of his son. His sons are to perform the job for him although, ironically, it is rather improbable especially in the context of Biff's priorities. Happy, his other son, is another matter since he accepts the competitive life of the corporate world with its ingenious manipulations and corruption.

Linda cannot cry because, she thinks, it is one of the usual absences of her husband when he is on a tour in New England. Is not Willy a salesman, after all ? If Willy is a salesman, he is a salesman in an old-fashioned way. Character and hardwork were sure signs of eventual success, but apparently not anymore. Now, the personal charm, gift of a gab, and the ability to sell matter. Willy vaguely recognizes this and this is the reason why he cannot understand the reasons for Biff's failure. For Biff is a smart person with handsome personality, initiative and drive. However, Biff, unlike Willy, is not seduced by the American dream of success. For that matter, even Willy, with all his talk about success, does not seem to be entirely enthralled by it. He feels always " temporary ". He craves for his successful brother and needs the stabilizing memory of his father and brother (family ?). He is never to have rest and harsh reality of dog-eat-dog philosophy of corporate ethics does not accomodate him although he has spent a lifetime and worked for the growth of the organization. Willy has grown old in the process and he can no longer undertake long and strenuous tours to New England anymore. To be sure, Willy is humane in his own way but, not being an intelligent person, he, like possibly any average American brought up on success-literature available to him through various channels of media and culture industry, is taken in by the enchanting temptations of the American myth of success.

He resolves the crisis of his life in suicide with a hope that the insurance money would give the children a break. But Biff and Linda are perplexed ; Willy remains an anti-thesis to the corporate world. But the turn of the century American economy, with all its horrors of the newly-arrived immigrants working long hours in the sweetshops for poor wages, had still offered opportunities to grow up and

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"make it " since it was still an expanding economy. But the economic structure after the Wall Street crash in 1929 and after the survival of the Great Depression, thanks mainly to the war, and especially the economic structure of the late Forties and the Fifties till now is the economy that can seldom be conducive to the beginners since they have to compete with the already established corporate sharks. What has happened is a change in business ethos. This is what Noam Chomsky says on this matter in a personal interview : " Since 1930s, of course, there is a lot of growth in the United States, but in a different direction. It is not the kind of growth that could absorb poor people ..... It's mostly high technology and services and so on. It's the kind of thing that basically absorbs the privileged and wealthy ..... "

This was the scenario in 1949 when the play was first produced. What happened before and the years after its production should make an interesting story, even if it is told repeatedly from different points of view. Interestingly, critics were surprised to see that Arthur Miller made this play, like many others of his, ethnically anonymous although the play's eventual translation into Yiddish convinced some that it was essentially Jewish in that it reflected the dilemma and *angst* of a little man who was powerless to face hostile societal ambguities. Of course, Miller has since been attacked repeatedly for this lapse in his other plays also. The fact that the play was produced almost immediately after the Holocaust further accentuated the charge against Miller's refusal to identify Jewishness of his vision.

One could possibly argue that since Miller belongs to the liberal tradition and to the philosophy enlightenment, he does not place a major emphasis on ethnic specificity. But it is difficult to convince oneself with such an argumentation. Richard Wagner, great German composer who influenced the modern literature significantly, used to declare that Jews could never produce authentic music because of their rootlessness in Germany. However anti-Semitic such comments are — the German intellectual presence in the long history of anti-Semitism deserves a more exhaustive discussion —, it is commonly accepted opinion in may literary circles now that the creative process benefits a great deal if it is grounded in the artist's roots. And thus James Joyce's Stephen Daedalus is determined " to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race " (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 253). Strangely, Miller's Liberal values, theoretically enriched by the tradition of the Enlightenment, urge him to reach beond ethnicity for the archetypal issues that beset the man in modern liberal democracies.

In actual fact, to come back to the point I made earlier, Miller uses the tragedy of Willy Loman to suggest the sad demise of the expectations of the humane face of the Enlightenment. The refugee intellectuals, who fled the Hitler's Nazism, in a notable book entitled *Dialectic of Enlightenment* ponder over the American situation :

> Here in America there is no difference between man and his economic fate. A man is made by his assets, income, position, and prospects. The economic mark

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coincides completely with a man's character. Everyone is worth what he earns and earns what he is worth. He learns what he is through the vicissitudes of his economic existence. He knows nothing else. The materialisitc critique of society once objected against idealism that existence determined consciousness and not vice versa, and that the truth about society did not lie in its idealistic conception of itself but in its economy ; Contemporary men have rejected such idealism. They judge themselves by thier market value and learn what they are from what happens to them in the capitalistc economy. (211)

Obviously, liberal democracies do not seem to be doing well certainly the American establishment. The all-powerful corporate world cares little about the little men in their hierarchy. Willy Loman cannot be accomodated fully beause Willy has his own misgivings even if they are not eloquently crystalized in his mind. He has instinctive ethical ways but he cannot convince himself definitely that there is a meaningful life beyond what Biff calls the " phony dream ". This dichotomy, in the last analysis, is the most damning indictment on the American system. One is born into Horatio Alger myth or gets indoctrinated by the mass culture and the media hype. Not accepting or nurturing such a myth as a role-model substance is generally perceived to be a failure or weakness or unmanliness. Willy is not strong enough or intelligent enough to articulate his instinctive perception of personal ethics and sense of justice. He desperately wavers to find a synthesis and to bring his innate humanism and American orientation towards competitive jungle together which appears to be impossible anyway. His pathetic suicide is his answer — " synthesis " or indictment of America — depending on one's point of view.

Has America changed over the years ? If Willy were alive, how would he respond to the changes on the American scene ? One could certainly conjecture some views in this connection. Since Willy is Miller's voice and creation reflecting his views of society, Miller's response to the America decades after the play's first production in the Forties, can also be grafted on Willy's context atleast whateever extent possible. The story of the Fifties " the plague years " also infamously known as the McCarthy era thoroughly bamboozled the liberal mind. Worse still, it proved how vulnerable a man can be, and how even decent people can be harrassed and pushed to a corner by the demagogic and state department vandals. Miller's *After the Fall*, though told in personal terms with explicit autobiographical overtones, is a condemnation of this political and institutionalized violence that breaks savagely into the lives of the people no matter how resistent they are quite often forcing them into complacency or making them unwilling accomplices. All of this is done in the name of democracy or freedom of expression. Perhaps this is the fall-out of the so-called " containment " policy and the cold war fever that lasted as long as it could.

The civil rights movement, the Bay of Pigs, the New Left, Vietnam war, the U.S. response to the continual Latin American crises and the Middle East affairs emerge as a defin-

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ing framework for the American post-war era. David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1961), William Whyte's *Organisation Man* (1956), Michael Harrington's *The other America* (1962) with its sequel *The New American Poverty* (1984) sum up some of the significant chapters in the American life not to speak about any number of books on Vietnam war and the black experience. America has many issues to deal with taking on various roles from a belligerent big bully to the preserver of democratic temper and peace in the world. Of course, the big business and what William Jame called " the bitch-goddess success " have become powerful myths as ever. The big business especially has become more powerful over the years than it is in the past with frequent no-holds-barred presence of the corporate raiders as they are famously called.

Frankly, Willy has gone to the eternal rest with a fond hope that his sons would find themselves and they would " make it ". The neurotic side of the American dream can be perceived in the response of his children which is a variance with their father's hope. Inevitably, America has changed a great deal and it is in the nature of the American psyche to change. Willy, it appears, would still suffer the same anxieties if he were to live today. More than a decade of the Republican conservatism has policies catering to the upper crust of the country. The poor white or non-white and the salaried sections still have ever-haunting situations like housing, steady income and a sense of peace and stability in personal relationships.

Willy is also a victim of the consumer society hire purchase facility, paying every month premiums on the house and things like refrigerator which generally cause them moments of anxiety and insecurity. More to the point perhaps is the need for an individual to have the dignity of maintaining himself and his family honourably. Willy somehow feels that the individual does not count in the complicated hierarchies of the corporate world. They are respected and listened to as long as they are useful to the survival and growth of the business. Willy would not, and could not, get the consideration from his bosses though, having slaved all his life for the company, he thinks he should now be accommodated.

As we are told, the present boss's father seems to have promised him to find a place in New York for him since in his advanced age he would not be able to withstand the long and strenuous tours to the New England stages. But with the new boss a new set of priorities come into focus and, as can be expected, the past commitments and loyalties can be conveniently erased to suit the dictates of a new environment. Predictably, Willy senses sadly that he is out of step with the times and reflects peculiarly on the trivial matters like he is not dressing to his advantage although the new salesman culture indeed seems to demand the need for personality culture in order to be successful as a salesman. One has to charm the customers with their personality which is pathetically different from the Franklinesque emphasis on character and industry as the foundation for American success. Things indeed seem to have changed and Willy is left behind. He longs for peace that is available for him when he remembers his brother, Ben, and his father, and des-

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perately longs for the agrarian vision of the Edenic America. But the machine and the machine-like institutions have shrivelled the puritanic vision of America as the Garden of Eden with near-satanic revenge.

However, Willy's pshyche is more complicated and more ambiguous than that. He attempts to perspectivise the society and its institutions in the best way possible for him. While recognizing the demise of the agrarian vision, he is also overwhelmed by the contingencies of the life and the life of his family i.e., his children and his wife. therefore, he makes his own choices, hopefully remedial and supposedly self-sustaining. It is all very well to state that Willy paid the price for his wrong dreams as if he is living in a caring society or, as Walter Lippman used to call, " the good society ". What the life of Willy Loman points to is the need for irreducible justice both on personal and collective level and the over-reaching compassion of the institutional structure. Any philosophy of progress that does not sufficiently declare its allegiance to these would be suspect and, on that account alone, can be dubious. If the past four decades of the American journey, both in foregin and domestic affairs, have any pointers, they do not necessarily show the humane framework as the key principle for societal infrastructure of which corporate power structure is a part ; and without which Willy Loman cannot find himself fully accommodated or vindicated.

❑

BIRTH OF A SAVIOUR

PROF. KOTA S.R. SARMA

When Snowmaids dance in hotter pants,
And shepherds, eating *fleurs-de-lis*,
Turn wolves and throw their trusts to winds ;
And goddess Nemesis is broken apart –
Head crossing seas, and limbs afly — ;
But pedestal tied to weight of fears — ;
Will liquid Fire then burn our feet,
And Heaven-in-labour groan in ' hell ' ?
Will *magi see the* ' tyger ' slide
Back to his lair from wasted wait,
His tail-tip goading shivering thighs ?

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RIPENESS IS ALL

V. SIVARAMAKRISHNA

N. Raghunathan, whose memory we cherish and to whom we pay our homage on the occasion of the centenary of his birth, belonged to the intellectual and spiritual aristocracy of the race. Steeped in the Indian scriptures and the classics of the East and the West, he disciplined himself to write precisely and purposefully. In examining " current ideas and development " in the light of the basic values of Indian culture, he brought to bear on his task not only vast learning but a fine sensibility, the " Vichara " of a philospher as well as " Sahridayatva " of a connoisseur. Reserving for his special attention and admiration the mystics of the world, he held up for our emulation the lives of the saints and sages of all times and climes and himself led a life of simplicity and austerity, guarding all the while his integrity like a precious jewel. Scholar he was, a ripe and good one, no doubt, but he was much more, a pilgrim set on the path leading to the goal that is Freedom. He carried the staff of Dharma all through his journey and never for once did he lose sight of the guiding star of Truth. Of such a one like him it could be said : He lived not in vain. He set an example, both by his Spartan life and the high quality of his writings, of perpetual striving stretching its arms towards perfection, moral, mental and spiritual.

Born on the 22nd of December, 1893, of G. Narayanaswamy Iyer and Gouriammal, in the village of Perunthottam of Thanjavur District of Tamil Nadu, Raghunathan had his early school education at Vishnupuram and Kumbakonam. His grandfather seems to have taken more than ordinary interest in the upbringing of what one can now think of as a precocious child. Hoisting his three-year-old grandson on his shoulders, at four-thirty sharp, the old man every day walked briskly to the river for the morning bath. And the half-sleepy and protesting boy was not allowed to enjoy the ride and slip into somnolence; he was taught to recite the two hundred verses of Niti Sastra and also learn the names of stars and miscellaneous lore on the borderland between astronomy and astrology. Recalling this childhood experience of instruction in ' Niti Sastra', Raghunathan wrote half a century later : "Acorss a gulf of half a century much of it still sticks in the memory, while most of what I have read since

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has mercifully dropped into oblivion. I little understand the purport of the slokas when I learnt them by rote. But the delighted recognition with which I welcome them when they flash upon the memory on appropriate occasions is a tribute to the profound intuition of the older pedagorg which rightly held that in dealing with the young, sound is more important than sense. The ' Niti Sastra ' is not only sound ethics but good poetry".

An uncle, as unfeeling as the old man, took charge of the nephew's English education. He forced the young one to study Johnson, the Lord Chesterfield and Carlyle. The head-master of the school in which Raghunathan studied - was it the "famous" Appu Sastriar of the Native High School, Kumbakonam ? - prescribed, for his part, doses of Cobbet and Goldsmith.

After a somewhat undistinguished early collegiate education at Kumbakonam, Raghunathan moved to Madras City with a " consuming thirst for knowledge and a restless passion to advance in it ". Never a lover of sports (though he talks of the riotous football matches at Kumbakonam) Raghunathan plunged deeper into the study of books, presumably on English literature as he was an English Litt. Honours student, with the only grouse against the hostel authority that it let the library, open " too late in the morning " and close " too early at night ". Such studiousness had its reward - he took a first class in the final examination.

It was also as a student in Madras that Raghunathan found himself in print for the first time. He made a survey of periodical literature in an article that appeared in Malabari's "East and West" (1915 or 16). He had also the satisfaction of the news being trumpeted by his life-long friend and the pioneer of the Indo-Anglian novel, K.S. Venkataramani. Venkataramani went about telling everybody, " Here is a new star on the horizon and that the brightest of them all. "

The " Star " fell over Fort St. George and its light lay hidden from view for a few years. And then something unusual happened, unusual as the Southerner would view it in those far-off days when a job with the Sarkar was the alpha and omega of life. The star rose and flew back to the sky and remained there a luminous one. It was the journalistic sky that Raghunathan blazoned. He joined the " Daily Express " of Madras in 1921 and moved on the " The Hindu " in 1926. He formally retired from " The Hindu. " For about three decades, Raghunathan blazed a new trail in journalism.

Writes Shri Rangaswami Parathasarathy in A hundred years of " The Hindu " (1978): " For over 20 years Raghunatha Aiyer was a by word in Indian journalism for his mastery of the pen, of constitutional law. Raghunathan qualified himself for the bar after taking his Honours Degree and his fearless advocacy of the cause of freedom. His written word travelled far beyond the confines of the country to extort admiration and respect for his sharp intellect and virile pen...He had a prodigious memory and could quote and cite arguments from journals and books to buttress his case with an effortless ease and mastery which should always remain a marvel... He was equally brilliant in light,

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short humorous pieces which enlivened the editorial page on most days of the week. When he wrote about saints and music composers and about Gandhiji, when he was in the jaws of death while on a fast and when he was assassinated, his eloquence, the sheer beauty of his prose and the flights of his racy style into a picturesque world of love and compassion and goodness, were a feast, (to the intellect and soul). For a man of Raghunathan's literary eminent it was no wonder that the literary suppliment. which he created and nurtured for over 25 years, achieved a national international reputation. "

By one of those fortunate accidents of history, Raghunathan started writing a causerie for a weekly not connected with " The Hindu " from February 16, 1946. For thirteen long years, Raghunathan wrote week after week (with an interruption of only six weeks) in " Swathantra " and its successor " Swarajya " (both now defunct Madras weeklies edited by that formidable journalist, Khasa Subba Rao) in a style that was deliberately adopted by him but was characteristically his own with no precedents and later imitations. The style indeed was the man. It was neither " light and easy " like Addison's not " majestic and sonorous " like Johnson's, the two writers with whom he was compared by competent critics. His prose rendered " the murmur of the spirit as purely and faithfully it represents the panoply in which it is set ". When read aloud one caught the continuous echo of a living voie with its individual timbre, strength and virginal integrity.

If one detected the euphony of Sanskrit in his writing, one also found oneself in the delightful company of the choice and master spirits of all ages. One rubbed shoulders with Manu and yajnavalka, Sankara and Socrates, Valmiki, Vyasa, Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti, Quintilian and Polonius, Homer, Virgil, Dante and Shakespeare, Keats, Shelly and Wordsworth, Burke, Burton, Browne and Berkley - in fact one got accquainted with range of world's literature and learnt of the best that was known and thought. Each Sotto Voce piece was a largesse of the spirit and not a " shower of isolated thoughts and images ". It had a unity of purpose being integral at the core and drawing its sustenance from a culture that had its source in Satya, Yajna and Tapas.

A perceptive critic wrote about the Sotto Voce in the fifties " Within the cribbing limits of a column or a paragraph, Raghunathan discovers an amplitude of amazing extent. Cradled in Sanskrit and steepted in English literature, he is one of a minority of the elect who make the best of both the worlds - East and West, past and present. Here and Hereafter ! He makes the timeless topical, and elucidates the enduring in the ephemeral. He can be dignified without posing, and pleasant without being trivial. He has a power of comprehension, an unforced urbanity and an ironic humour which are all vintage virtues. He fits ancient saws to modern instances with a quiet appropriateness which grows on reflection. The Advaitic jargon comes easy enough to every plausible actor in this land of immemorial impositions. But he combines the integrity of a practising Vedantin with the scholar's unwearied pursuit of excellence. How quiet are his paradoxes, and what a tact of style he has -

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impalpable yet unmistakable - the lingering sweetness of old perfume...The curse of his tribe - they are but a handful among us - is that they are martyrs to artistic continence. Nothing but the very best would content them ; and diffident of achieving it, they dwell with it platonically in the companionable solitude of their soul ".

Raghunathan's style indeed, as Gibbon put it, is " the image of character, " the "seela " that is held invaluable in Indian culture. When Prahalda made a gift of his " Seela " to Indra in the guise of a Brahmin, All other values came out of his body reducing the noble Asura to nothingness. The values that followed " Seela " were : Dharma, Satya, Vritta, Bala and Shree. Dhritarashtra told Duryodhana that what the latter lacked was " Seela " which Yudhishtira had and thereby he attracted to his court all wise men.

Ranganathan sought to evoke a particular " rasa " in each piece and the choice of his subjects had an element of surprise of novelty. But there was no mistaking the object of his comment - to give short shift to attempts at abridging freedom, poke fun at lighthearted pronouncements of men in power or in the limelight, to warn against heedless meddling by authority with established institutions, customs and traditions and invariably to stress the " Dharmic " basis of society.

Raghunathan left no one in doubt that he was a traditionalist and an individualist. He set much store by the Vedic lore and the puranic tales and lost no opportunity to proclaim the values they embodied. He was prophetic when in the fifties and the sixties, he denounced the authoritarian trends in Indian polity and the Indian brand of socialism. He believed in a pluralistic society and argued for professionals - teachers, lawyers, doctors and journalists. It is from the point of view of his basic faith in age-old values, and political convictions based on reason and logic that his criticism of the Communal G.O., the Tanjore Pannayal Ordinance, the abortive Elementary Education scheme (all of the Madras Government); the Hindu Code, the Constitution as well as the several Amendments to it, nationalisation of insurance (in the Fifties), Central planning, the handling of the Kashmir problem, attitude to Chinese aggression in Tibet, the language issue, secularism, among other things, have to be viewed. His conservatism was healthy creative and constructive deriving its strength from a life-long study and reflection of the thinkers of all ages. One found an echo in his writings Will Durant's conclusion in his 10-volume " The story of Civilization ".

" No single man, however brilliant or well-informed, can come in one lifetime to such fullness of understanding as to safely judge and dismiss the customs and institutions of society, for these are the wisdom of generations after centuries of experiment in the laboratory of history ".

Politics and politicians occupied but a small part of Raghunathan's wide canvas. He never attempted the familiar journalistics profile of anyone in authority or in the limelight ; he had no political heroes. The only lengthy account of the life and work of anyone he wrote, on request, related to the Rt. Hon'ble V.S. Srinivasa Sastri,

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who hailed from his own district of Thanjavur and who shared his passion for knowlege and precision in the use of the English language. But the warts in the portrait were prominent enough for all to see.

Among men of achievement in the world of human endeavour, Raghunathan reserved his admiration for Dr. C.V. Raman whom he described as the " Tapasvi of science". He did not, however, hesitate to pick up the guantlet when Dr. Raman let himself go on the anatomy of the human tongue. Raghunathan rose to the defence of the " Chilli " in a matter that would have made even Dr. Raman beat a hasty retreat. (See " Symphony of the Palate " in this volume) Raghunathan chose for his charming cameos saints and scholars, writers, musicians and obscure but gifted men who lived quiet but dignified lives.

It was not without reason that K.S. Venkataramani dedicated his booklet " The Nature of Creative Art " (1950) to "Raghunathan the Rasikan ". The Rasikan, by definition, is one who gets at the essence of things, artistic and literary, and exults in the joy of his discovery. Like the bee that sucks honey from flowers of a varied hue, he transforms it into the concentrate of much greater sweetness and leaves it to others to savour it. The Rasikan too imparts something of his own joy to others. Raghunathan did precisely the same in many of his Sotto Voce Papers.

After his retirement from " The Hindu " in 1957 Raghunathan settled down in Bangalore to devote all his time to the work of translating *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Srimad Valmiki Ramayanam* into English - the one he looked upon as the Bhakti Sastra and the other as the Dharma Sastra. Anyone else of his age would have found the translation work too daunting to be taken up and completed within a foreseeable time-span. Raghunathan looked upon the work as a *Rishi Rna*, a debt to the seers of the past.

Srimad Bhagavatam in two volumes came out in May, 1976. The Darling of Brindavan held Raghunathan in thrall and in his writings on Sri Krishna, he makes his language glow in all the colours of the Roman candle. " The supreme art ", he says, " that makes righteousness readable scatters its largesse with a lavish hand in these illuminated pages ' (of *Srimad Bhagavatam*). Krishna, in his view, is most emphatically not a God cast in the image of man. The Bhagavata Purana makes us appreciate the co-existence of the charm of the human and the truth of the superhuman. *The Bhagavatam* holds out hopes even for the chronic sinner if only he will open out his heart to the gentle influence of love and the irresistible charm of the Divine Child. In his love and adoration for the Lord of the Gita, Raghunathan was in the good company of his fellow-Tanjurean Sir P.S. Sivaswami Iyer (1864-1946), who had " Gopala " on his lips as his life was ebbing away.

Raghunathan's translation of the *Ramayana* in three volumes (1981) is a work of scholarly labour spread over many years. Raghunathan's approach to the *Ramayana* was philosophical though he did not under-estimate its poetic felicities and its message of *Sarangati* Rama uphold Dharma as the axis of the universe which revolves round the twin poles of compassion

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and renunciation - the two dominant notes of the Ramayana. " The Ramayana has something pertinent to say on all aspects of Dharma - its relevance to the social order, the cosmic order, the sense of mutual obligation that binds the universe together with the Karmic ties, the religious impulse which is the parent of that ethic, and lastly the Adyatmic reality to the realisation of which Dharma finds its crown and consummation. "

In his Madras University lectures (Prof. L. Venkataratnam lectures for 1962-63), Raghunathan examined the relationship between reason and intuition in Indian culture. He emphasized " Viveka " as the key to the understanding of the relationship, as well as the secret of the continuity of Indian culture.

The lectures contain rich material on all aspects of Indian culture and are notable for an effective rebuttal of Schweitzer's view of Indian ethical concerns.

Raghunathan was a lover of all languages and, in particular, made little distinction between English and Tamil. When the language controversy was at its height and a widespread tendency to denigrate English was in evidence, he pleaded for full development of the Indian languages before English was jettisoned. " Catch the (childern) young and turn them loose into the flower-garden of Tamil" was his advice. He translated into English of six long poems of the sangam Age of Tamil literature (150-250 AD). In doing so he also broadcast the message of sangam poet, " All the world is my home and all men kin ".

Raghunathan was proud of his native district of Thanjavur, of which he said : " I was born in the Tanjore country, which is totally innocent of elevations other than those of the mind and soul ". Who would not, if one remembers even the single fact that the Trinity of Karnatic Music, Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri belonged to this district ? But Raghunathan was anything but parochial though he gave the misleading impression in his talk, affecting as he did the Tanjore lingo especially when he was in a temper, that he was a Tanjorean first and everything else next.

Steepted as he was in the classics of Sanskrit he looked upon his country as a sacred land but he also viewed the world as the common inheritance of mankind. " Milton and Shelly sang to some of us long before they spoke ", he wrote in 1946. His staunch belief in " adhikaribheda " and to which he gave unequivocal expression, led many to associate some measure of intellectual arrogance with him. Perhaps, he could not help being arrogant.

Were he alive to-day, he would have been amused by the spectacle of a hung parliament at the Centre, President's rule in a few States, Marxist rule in West Bengal and unstable Governments in most other States. Did he not say that adult franchise was a blunder ? He would have chuckled at the talk of " reform " in the economic field. Reform what ? Did he not protest against the Avadi brand of socialism ? Though he would not say, " I told you so ", he would remind you of his relentless fight against communism and the scorn he poured on saw-dust Caesars. Tibet, China, Kashmir, Russia - did he not make fun of Hindi-Chini and Hindi-Russi bhai-bhaism ?

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Yet, instead of gloating over his prophecies, he may feel rather sad over the developments in the polity - a weak Centre, malpractices in elections, the pervasive corruption in all, and especially in high, places, the misdemeanours of judges, the steep fall in the standards of bureaucratic efficiency and the sickness of sycophancy afflicting the bureaucrats, the Bofors Deal and the Securities Scam, the apathy of the intelligentsia and the pronounced herd-instinct of the masses. So long as he was alive, he lost no opportunity to shout like Vyasa of old :

Urdhvabaahuviraubheysha na cha kachchit-srunoti mae
Dharmad-arthachcha kaamachcha sa kimartham na sevyate?

With upraised arms I shout, and no-one heeds me, " In Dharma is profit and pleasure, why then will they not cleave to it? "

Raghunathan played the role of Vyasa in his day - vast was his learning, huge was his written output and great was his passion for righteousness that is Drama. It may be right to describe him as a gadfly but his purpose was not merely to irritate but remind us of a tradition that set much store by propriety in thought, word and deed. When will another of his kind come ? ❐

BROKEN CHARIOT WHEEL

DR. DHARMAVIR BHARTI

I'm a broken chariot wheel
but discard me not !
When this impregnable phalanx
engulfs some intrepid Abhimanyu
challenging mighty armies
I may come in handy.
When great warriors of renown
partisans of Devil
sunk in their career of crime
determined on smothering
with deadly weapons doomed
the solitary voice unarmed
I may outmatch their munitions
I'm a broken chariot wheel
but discard me not !
When the massive pageant of history
suddenly drifts into a false course
the broken chariot wheel
may herald and proclaim the Truth.

(Translated from " History " Dr. Ravi S. Varma)

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BOOK REVIEWS

Book No 8894

HARMONY OF RELIGIONS by Thomas Manninezhath C.M.I; Motilal Banarsidass, 41 U.A. Bunglow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110007; 1993; xx + pp. 193; Rs. 175.

The western world knows its saints and mystics, it's Boehme, Eckhart, St Francis of Assisi ... and coming down to recent times, Rainer Maria Rilke and so on. But we Indians do not know anything about our own innumerable spiritual giants that had walked this subcontinent down the centuries, ' gems of the purest ray serene, ' like Tayumanavar. Unfortunately, we have always been damned by a negative appreciation of history's value. Thomas Manninezhath has broken new ground in this commendable enterprise of introducing our Masters to us as well as to the west. He has brought to bear on his work a scholarship honed to the finest standards.

Tayumanavar's lyrics breathe if nothing a transcendental note. He was verily a *brahma kavi.* In the diction he employs there is no place for any cheap linguistic chauvinism. Adept equally in Samskrit and Tamil, his language combines telling beauty and vigour, with consummate metaphor and imagery. Ever steeped in a state of unitive bliss with God, how can the slightest suggestion of a conflict ever defile his mind? Fie upon all doctrinaire noises, schismatic tarantaras. The profound old wisdom towering above us, the stately music and the lilt of the verses, resound like the deep voice of an organ. He is past all disharmonies. From harmony, from heavenly harmony the universal frame began. From all the compass of the notes, the lyrics run, the diapason closing full in the unitive experience with God.

That experience is the axis of truth which made him intuit the essence of different religious and hold that alone as the hub or navel around which all religions can and should meet in an atmosphere of harmony. The only true religion is that which accommodates everything in the locus of all-embracingness. This is promotion of fellowship and it is one of the operational dimensions of *samarasam* as Tayumanavar understood it. To quote our author, ' The poet-saint praised, glorified and incessantly longed for that inseparable union, and invited everyone to participate in that

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bliss-giving experience of oneness. ' The saint's call was, ' O people of the world come together to see the Divine Hall that bestows liberation. '

We close the book with gratitude, but alas, not without a sigh. One is constrained to make the remark out of sadness, and not out of any spirit of carping criticism. The reviewer, a Tamilian, could not recognize any passage from the Tamil transliteration except after much guess work. I felt cheated in that I could not immediately enjoy the choicest Tayumanavar fare spread out before me. It is not our case that the author has been at fault. Obviously, he must be following some accepted academic canons in this regard but how off the mark!

That takes one to the larger and somewhat controversial issue. Primarily, Tamil is not phonetic language, let us face it. There can be no imposition that Tamil should be spoken only in a particular way. The difficulties of a successful transliteration are admittedly enormous. But the feeling nags on. All this painstaking transliteration, to what end? To close, my gratitude for the learned author and his labour of love.

G. NAGANATHAN

" THE JOURNEY OF MY LIFE " Autobiography of Tanguturu Prakasam Supplement by Tenneti Viswanatham. Translated from Telugu into English by Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao. sponsored by Prakasam Institute of Development Studies and published by Booklinks Corporation, Hyderabad-27. Vol. I Rs. 350, Vol. II Rs. 350.

This is the story of Tanguturi Prakasam, the lion-heart, as narrated by himself, originally in Telugu. His autobiography, however, did not cover the latter part of his life. The task of completing the narration was undertaken by Tenneti Viswanatham, the most natural choice for the task. The original in Telugu has been translated into English by Prof. I.V. Chalapati Rao, a renowed author of biographies.

Prakasam, during his life time, was the darling of the Andhras. Logically so as he was the very epitome of the ethos of the Telugu people, with all their good and indifferent aspects of pshychological make-up. He was at once brave, generous, tenacious and at the same time emotional, lacking in foresight and business sagacity. Thus he was a typical Andhra and identified himself with the Telugu people. From 1921 when he entered the national movement after giving up this lucrative legal practice in the High Court of Madras, until his demise in 1955, his story was the history of the political movement of Andhra Desa. As Revenue Minister and Chief Minister of the composite Madras province and later as the first Chief Minister of the new State of Andhra he left an indelible mark on the people.

He ardently believed in and endeavoured to implement the Gandhian programme of rural develop-

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ment and Grama Swarajya. It is a irony of history and also of human relations that despite this, Gandhiji was not favourably inclined towards him.

It is a remarkable feature of Prakasam's career that from utter poverty and anonimity, he quickly rose to high prominence and great affluence by sheer dint of his own effort and later once again slipped back into acute poverty during his later life. This too was due to his own sacrifice and lack of commercial acumen.

The saga of his great life was told in part by Prakasam himself in Telugu calling the narration as " Naa Jeevita Yaatra " (the journey of my life). This reviewer had the opportunity to read the original in Telugu also. The simple Telugu style used in it and the direct manner of narration was typical of Prakasam.

Evidently he did not maintain a diary and he mostly relied on his memory while writing the autobiography. Occasionally some incidents and individuals of significance were not mentioned. For instance the no-tax campaign of Peda Nandipadu in the then Guntur district was actually conducted under the direct leadership of Parvataneni Veeraiah but Prakasam forgot to mention his role while dealing with that campaign. Such are only occasional lapses, most probably due to lack of record.

Prakasam did not hesitate to call a spade a spade and to criticise his contemporaries. A historian shall not run away from that task, however embarassing and unpleasant it might be. Being a lawyer by training and profession, he projected his point of view on several issues very forcefully.

Tenneti Viswanatham who wrote the supplement, containing the latter part of Prakasam's life, narrated it in great detail. His admiration for Prakasam was patent and he very well played the role of Boswell to Prakasam's Dr. Johnson. But he was sticking to actual events as they occurred. The story as told by Viswanatham brings out the nobility and generosity of his hero in full measure.

Prof. Chalapati Rao's rendering into English is very polished and adequate to the task. It does not indeed read as a translation. One gets an impression that it is the original itself.

The autobiography turns out to be the history of Andhra Desa contemporaneous to the life of Prakasam. It has all the qualities and merits of a very valuable source of the history of the Telugus of the period.

Such is the value of this book worth reading not only as the autobiography of a great and noble leader of people, but also as a worthy contribution to history.

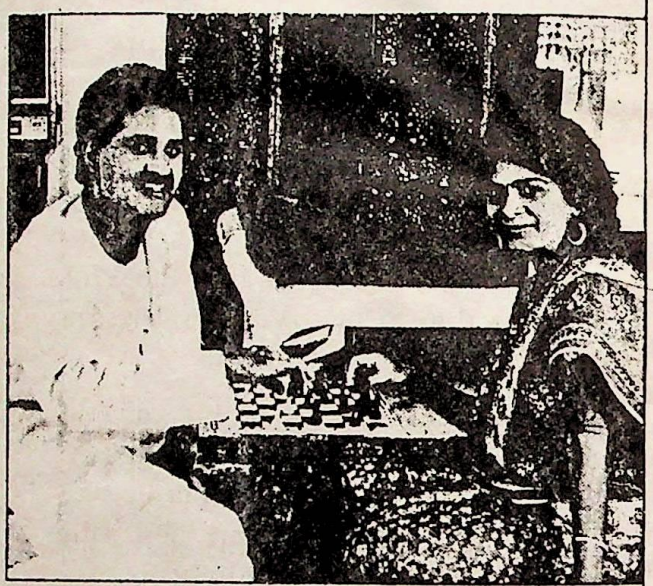
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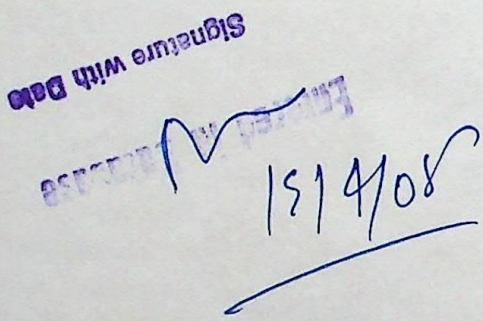
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